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FAMOUS CRIMES

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THE DISCOVERY OF THE MURDER BY COURVOISIER.

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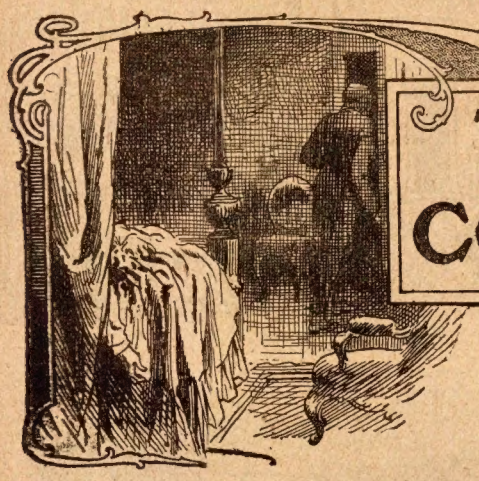


The Conviction of COURVOISIER.

"Envy, eldest-born of hell, embrued
Her hands in blood, and taught the sons of men
To make a death which Nature never made,
And God abhorred; with violence rude to break
The thread of life, ere half its length was run,
And rob a wretched brother of his being.
With joy Ambition saw, and soon improved
The execrable deed."

—MILTON, "Paradise Lost."

CONSIDRING the large number of titled persons in England, it is surprising that more members of the nobility have not fallen a prey to the assassin. One would naturally expect that where plunder is the object which has led a criminal to take the life of his fellow man those who in the eyes of the world have more portable possessions would be the first to be attacked; but history shows us that this is not the case. Whether it is a feeling that to some extent the Stuarts' pet theory of the divine right of kings applies in a lesser degree to nobles, and makes murder both murder and sacrilege, or whether fear that the prominence of the victim renders detection more sure restrains the murderer's hand, we do not know; but certain it is that the nobility seem to be free from the dangers that beset the ordinary man of means. In the early part of the last century, when a peer was regarded as a person to be spoken of with the greatest reverence and humility, this security was more strongly marked. The consternation and horror which spread around London on the morning of May 6, 1840, when it was rumoured that the aged Lord William Russell had been brutally done to death in his house in Park Lane can therefore be better imagined than described.

Lord William Russell was a scion of the noble house of Bedford. He was the third son of a Marquess of Tavistock, who was killed in the hunting-field, and his two elder brothers in turn wore the ducal coronet. In his younger days Lord William had taken a great interest in politics, and sat in the Lower House, but though he gave wise advice on many occasions, he never made a name for himself at St. Stephen's. Still, he was a well-known man, and very popular in London.

At the time of which we speak he was seventy-three years of age, and had retired from public life, for old age had brought with it infirmities, and the nobleman was deaf and very feeble. After his children grew up, Lord William took a small house in Norfolk Street, Park Lane, and lived very quietly. A cook, housemaid, and valet lived on the premises with him, and his groom and coachman resided at the mews close by.

On Tuesday, May 5, Lord William stayed indoors all the morning, and then had lunch, after which he went out to pay several calls on contemporaries of his, following them up with a visit to Brooks's Club, of which he was a much respected member. Shortly before six he went home again and took his pet dog out for a short walk. That night he dined alone, and after dinner retired to the drawing-room, where he read till about half-past eleven, at which hour he was accustomed to retire. His valet, a Swiss, named Courvoisier, helped him to undress, and was the last person who saw the aged nobleman alive.

The house, No. 13, Norfolk Street, consisted of a basement, three storeys, and an attic. The basement contained a kitchen in the front, and a small pantry at the back. A door from the basement gave access to an area yard, enclosed all round by high walls. On the ground floor was the large dining-room, and two drawing-rooms filled the first floor. Above the front drawing-room was Lord William's bedroom, and adjoining it was a spare room. The servants slept in the attics, the female domestics in the front room, and the valet in the back room, which was only separated from the other apartment by a flimsy lath and plaster partition.

At half-past six on the morning of May 6, Sarah Mancer, the housemaid, rose, and, after dressing, called Courvoisier, the valet, and went downstairs to commence the duties for the day. When she went into the drawing-room, where her master had been sitting on the previous evening, she noticed that the writing-desk was in great disorder; but inasmuch as Lord William was far from being a tidy man, this did not strike her as remarkable. Leaving the drawing-room, she went down to the ground floor, and there she was astonished to find a large number of articles which belonged to her master lying about. In one corner she found a large blue cloak, of the pattern which we nowadays associate with the Iron Duke; in another she saw the nobleman's opera-glasses; while tied up in a napkin were a number of small articles of value. That was all she could distinguish in the faint light, but when she had opened the shutters she saw that the drawers and cupboards in the dining-room had been ransacked, and that plate of every kind was lying about on the floor. Naturally, her first thought was of burglars; and, much alarmed, she ran upstairs and called the cook, and again knocked at Courvoisier's door. This time the valet opened the door, and came out fully dressed with the exception of his coat.

She at once asked him if he had heard anything in the night, and he said no, for he had been asleep all the time. Together Courvoisier and Mancer went downstairs to the pantry, where they found everything in great confusion, and thence the couple went to awaken their master, and tell him that his house had been robbed.

The valet went to the window to open the shutters, and no sooner had he done so than the housemaid gave a shriek, and rushed out of the room. Courvoisier turned, and saw his old master lying on the bed, with his throat cut from ear to ear; the sheets were saturated with blood, and there were large patches of clotting blood on the pillow. On to the floor the ruddy stream had trickled, leaving large blotches of crimson on the light carpet. No signs of disorder were to be seen in any other part of the room, nor were there any other blood marks about the apartment.

When Mancer left the room she ran out into the street

and gave the alarm. Servants from the houses opposite came across, and Lord William's coachman and groom were fetched from the mews. Then a surgeon was summoned, but the instant he saw the body on the bed he knew that his skill could avail nothing. Before the doctor arrived the police had heard of the affair, and were in the house. They examined the bedroom, and then went round the house, accompanied by the maid and man-servant. In the basement they found the door by the pantry leading out into the back area slightly ajar, and on examining the door-posts saw that they had been bruised from top to bottom with some blunt instrument of the jemmy type. Courvoisier remarked to them that the burglars must have entered by that door; and indeed it appeared too obvious.

The next thing to do was to find out what was missing, and Inspector Tedman went carefully through the deceased nobleman's property with Courvoisier. There was an empty note-case, which the valet said had contained a ten and a five-pound note on the previous evening; a gold watch, and several rings were also missing, but none of the plate was touched, though it was scattered all over the floors of the dining-room and passage. The bundle tied up in a napkin contained minor articles of plate and a gold pencil-case. As far as could be conjectured, the burglars must have been disturbed, and fled without carrying their booty with them.

As there were only the three servants in the house at the time of the occurrence, it was but natural that suspicion should point to them, and to clear themselves they asked the police to examine their boxes. One by one Inspector Tedman had the servants' baggage brought down to him, and every box and package was ransacked; but nothing which was suspicious was found. The inspector took particular care to see that no clothes bore traces of having been lately washed or had blood-stains upon them.

In the afternoon an inquest was held on the body of the late lord. Sarah Mancer described the state in which she had found the house, and gave an accurate account of her movements on the previous day; the doctors told the jury the nature of the wounds from which the old peer had died, and pointed out that it was utterly impossible for them to have been self-inflicted. One cut alone almost severed the head from the body, and others had been inflicted after that one, which of itself was sufficient to cause instant death. Courvoisier was examined at some length, and stated that previously to his entering Lord William's service he had been for two years with Mr. Fector, the M.P. for Dover, who had given him an excellent character. An acquaintance of his, named Carr, had had tea with him on the evening of May 5, and the two had gone out for a short stroll afterwards. Courvoisier waited at dinner, and had then gone to a neighbouring tavern to fetch the beer for the servants' supper, after which he had locked all the doors, and had not left the house again.

That was all that could be discovered about the terrible tragedy, and the jury had to bring in a verdict of wilful murder against some person unknown. It was unsatisfactory, but there was no clue to point to the culprit; accordingly no arrest could possibly be made, and the police were at a standstill. Nevertheless, they thought that it might be as well to keep the three servants under strict surveillance. Carr was interviewed, and easily proved that he could not possibly have been in the house; and then a theory was formulated which went to show that an unknown man had hidden himself in the house, either early in the day or while the valet was fetching the supper beer, and had committed the murder after the household were asleep. Rewards to the extent of £450 were offered for the recovery of the missing articles, and for the capture of the murderer, but nothing was heard of either for some time. This was very trying for the police, for that body had only just been enrolled, and the daily papers contained scathing criticisms on the "new police," and compared them very unfavourably with the old Bow Street Runners. Even the "Times" lost its usual dignified tone, and complained that after two days the police had no clue to the perpetrator of a barbarous murder.

But the police were not inefficient. Before three days had elapsed from the committal of the murder they had a clue, but they did not give it to the world at once, though they arrested the suspected murderer immediately. On the Friday after the murder some workpeople, who had been called in to assist in the examination of the house, commenced to search the drains, and opened all the pipes in the building. To do this they had to take up certain of the boards and to strip the wainscoting from one or two rooms. When they came to remove the wainscoting in the pantry, they found a purse containing gold coins and several rings, while behind the skirting board underneath the sink they discovered a silver Waterloo medal and a five-pound note, which was recognised as the one which had been in the note-case found in the deceased nobleman's room.

These articles were shown to Courvoisier, who declared

"Had he heard anything in the night?

that he had never seen them before. "I know nothing about them," he said. "I am innocent, my conscience is clear. I never saw that medal before."

Needless to say, he was at once taken into custody, and on the following morning a gold seal and a gold signet ring were found in the same locality. On the thirteenth of the month the gold watch which was known to have belonged to Lord William was discovered concealed under the leaden casing of the pantry sink.

Inspector Tedman was in charge of the prisoner, and really tried to help him in his difficulty as much as was consistent with the interests of justice. On the morning of the 14th of May, Courvoisier asked Tedman to get him some clean linen from his box, and the inspector went to the house for that purpose. When he came to unfold a shirt in order to pack it more expeditiously, he was a little surprised to find a pair of servant's gloves concealed in the garment. The gloves were slightly stained with blood. Besides this two silk handkerchiefs and a torn shirt front, all spotted with blood, were found in the prisoner's box. How these things escaped the eyes of the police on the first occasion that they examined the boxes has never been explained.

On this evidence Courvoisier was taken before the magistrates, and after several remands was committed to take his trial on the capital charge at the Old Bailey.

At the first June Sessions at the Central Criminal Court the Grand Jury brought in a true bill against Courvoisier, and he was placed in the dock to take his trial on the 18th of June, 1840. For the prosecution appeared Messrs. Adolphus, Bodkin, and Chambers, and for the prisoner were briefed Phillips and Clarkson. In the advocates who were selected to attack his innocence Courvoisier was singularly unfortunate, for Adolphus had been for many years the senior leader at the Old Bailey Bar, and was notorious for his rough dealing, although for the few years preceding this historic trial the eminent leader had done little work, owing to physical weakness and failing eyesight. He attained no little renown as an historian, but his method of handling criminal cases had unfortunately compelled his contemporaries to class him in the ranks of the "Old Bailey Lawyers." Needless to say showed at once that he had lost none of his former skill, in spite of the years which had passed over his head.

The trial took place before a crowded court, the anxiety to see the man who was charged with killing one of "the holy aristocracy" drawing even ladies of the highest rank to the unsavoury precincts of the premier criminal court of the country. In opening for the Crown, Adolphus manifested a bias against the prisoner which has since been stigmatised by all eminent lawyers as most unwarrantable. He was paid, and, if report be true, well paid, to establish the prisoner's guilt, but he overstepped the bounds which custom and decent feeling have laid down for the conduct of criminal cases. That he was convinced of the prisoner's guilt we are bound to believe, but he had no right to browbeat the jury into accepting his decision. He knew full well that the evidence which he was about to call was deficient in its certainty, and he showed it in his speech; at the same time he put forward theories which seemed plausible enough, and which his experience of juries told

COURVOISIER WAS EXAMINED AT SOME LENGTH.

the opprobrious term "Old Bailey Lawyer" no longer has the significance which was attributed to it in the early parts of the last century. Then it meant that the counsel did not scruple to stoop to any trickery to obtain a conviction or an acquittal according to the side for which he was briefed. Now a more honourable body of men cannot be found than the barristers who plead in the Central Criminal Court.

The leader for the defence, Charles Phillips, was a most gifted Irishman, who had obtained much kudos for his handling of criminal cases; nevertheless, he was given to flights of oratory which would not be tolerated for a moment in the present day. His conduct of this case certainly did not redound to his credit, and, through no fault of his own, he tarnished his brilliant career by his defence of Courvoisier. There can be no doubt that when the case was opened Phillips thoroughly believed in the innocence of his client, and he did his best to communicate this belief to the jury. As a cross-examiner he had few equals, and the manner in which he dealt with the masses of evidence which were brought forward by the prosecution him would be readily believed, and then he did not call a tittle of evidence in support of the lines which he had taken, but relied on the credulity of the "twelve good men and true," regardless of the fact that the life of a fellow-creature was at stake.

He opened his speech with a detailed account of the discovery of the murder. He pointed out that this was a crime which burglars could not have committed. "It can be proved," said he, "that the doors were shut and the windows fastened, and no other access was available from the exterior." He endeavoured to show that the manner in which the plate and property had been strewn on the floors of the passage and basement was merely an attempt to induce the discoverers to believe that burglars had attacked the house from the rear, and, on hearing an alarm, had escaped by the front door, which they had unbolted. In opposition to this it could clearly be proved that the back door and door-posts showed marks on them which could only have been made from within and could not under any circumstances have been caused by persons outside the house. Another point to which he drew great attention

was the conduct of the prisoner when the discovery was made. "Is it likely," he asked, "for a man who knows that he is innocent to rely on the noise made by a housemaid to awaken his sleeping master, while he rushes to the window to open the shutters? Would it not have been more consistent with reason if he had gone softly to his master's bed, and, awakening him gently, have endeavoured to allay his fears and calm his agitation? I will allow that though his box was searched none of the stolen articles were discovered in his possession, but opposed to this I will point out that no man of the most mediocre intelligence would conceal stolen articles in the very place which would be first searched. Again, the positions in which the property of the deceased nobleman was discovered were the very places to which the prisoner had free access and where he would be most likely to hide them, namely, in the skirting and wainscoting of his own pantry."

Continuing, the learned counsel tried to show that motive was not wanting. The prisoner had frequently expressed himself as discontented with his situation and his salary, and had been heard to say that if he possessed half of his master's money he would not remain in England. Like most foreigners, doubtless Courvoisier believed that Lord William Russell carried vast sums of money about with him—in fact, was an English "milor," and following up his foreign instinct, the prisoner turned to murder as the natural prelude to plunder.

In support of his statements, Adolphus called the housemaid as his first witness, and from her he elicited the following facts, which, if they do not bear out the fanciful theories of the Crown counsel, at least throw some little light on the terrible tragedy.

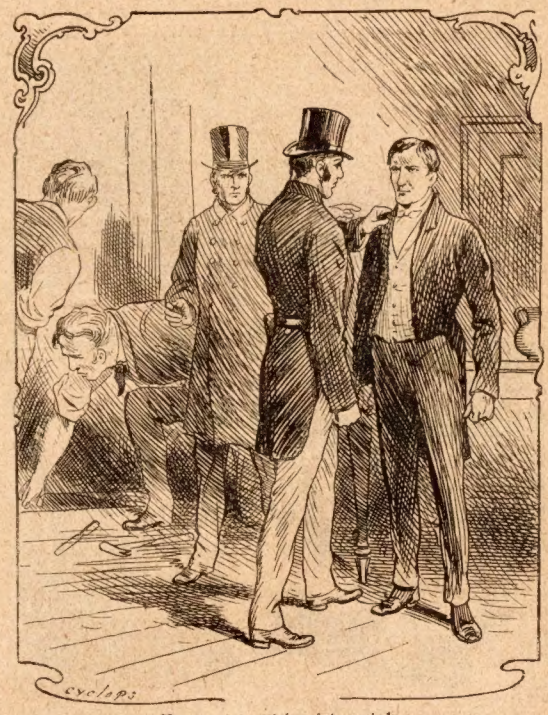
Sarah Mancer said that she had been in the service of the deceased peer for three years, but that Courvoisier had only been at Norfolk Street for a few weeks. She had always been on very friendly terms with the young Swiss. On the night of the murder, Courvoisier had complained of the fiery temper of his master and had said that he did not think that he would stay long under him. On two occasions the valet had remarked to her: "Old Billy is a rum old chap. If I had his money I should not remain in England long." She had taken these remarks as jokes, but was bound to admit that she had noticed the prisoner looking at Lord William's possessions very attentively on several occasions. He was very anxious to know what property was kept in the various rooms all over the house and used to examine the cupboards whenever he had a chance alone.

When cross-examined by Mr. Phillips, she admitted that although she had been interrogated on several separate occasions before the coroner and magistrates, she had not mentioned that Courvoisier was curious as to his master's property before. She also said that when she had discovered the state of the ground floor she did not say to the prisoner, "Let us go and tell his lordship that the house has been robbed," but remarked, "Let us go and see where his lordship is." This the advocate for the defence tried to get her to declare was said intentionally, and showed that she was aware that the aged nobleman was dead, but Sarah Mancer vowed that it was the first expression which came into her head, and was not a carefully-considered sentence. As to the marks on the back door, she had not noticed them until the police were in the house. It had not occurred to her to look for the place where the burglars had effected an entrance. On the morning of the murder she had been asked by the prisoner to remove a step-ladder from the back area and had done so. If the step-ladder had been in the area it would not have been difficult for anyone to have scaled the back wall and thus got into the neighbouring premises.

The housemaid was followed by the cook, Mary Hannell, who corroborated her fellow-servant's evidence, but added that some of the nobleman's plate was missing and was being advertised for. This point was greatly in Courvoisier's favour, as he could not have disposed of the plate without detection; at least, so the police averred.

Then came the coachman and the servants from the opposite house, who described the manner in which they were called in in a hurry. The prisoner, they said, was very agitated, and continually exclaimed: "Oh, my God, what shall I do? I have been with his lordship for only five weeks! What shall I do for my character?" They thought that the sight of the murdered man lying in his gore was enough to unman the prisoner, and did not attribute any sinister meaning to the words.

As we have said, the medical evidence proved that suicide was an impossibility, death being instantaneous and caused by the first wound, and the same evidence was repeated at the trial. Then came the only policeman called on the first day of the trial. Police-constable Baldwin was the first officer to enter the house after the committal of the murder. He had found the prisoner sitting behind the door with his hands over his face. He had tried to get Courvoisier to talk, but had not succeeded, and could not



He was at once taken into custody.

persuade the valet to render any assistance. He had examined the back door and had observed marks of violence on the jambs and lintels of it. Then he had made a careful survey of the back yard. There was a large quantity of dust on the party walls, but he could not see that any of it had been disturbed. Any person climbing over the wall must have disturbed the dust. No scratches could be found on the plaster of any of the walls.

Under the lash of Phillips, the poor policeman made a very sorry show. We have said that the newly-formed force was far from popular; this Phillips was well aware of, and tried his best to get the constable's evidence discounted by the jury. To do this, he attacked the "Bobby" on the question of the reward. At first Baldwin said that he had not heard anything about any reward, and then he was forced to admit that the proclamation offering the £450 had been read out in the General Orders. With this evidence the first day of the trial ended, as did the case for the prosecution, as far as they then knew. There was a strong presumption that the prisoner had committed the murder, but there was absolutely no direct proof against him, and with his previous excellent character there is little doubt that had the jury only been in posses-

sion of the facts as we at present know them, Courvoisier would have been instantly acquitted.

At the time of the murder France was suffering from a violent fit of Anglophobia, and it is not surprising that the foreign name of the accused attracted the attention of the French Press. While defending the prisoner as well as their knowledge and prejudice admitted, the French papers really damaged his case tremendously. In one of the Paris journals the suggestion was made that if Courvoisier was the murderer, he would naturally have taken any of the plate which had been stolen to a foreign hotel, and that therefore he could at once have been proved guilty.

In Leicester Place, Leicester Square, there was then a small hotel, called the Hotel Dieppe. It was kept by a M. Vincent and his partner, M. Piolaine, and the wife of the latter acted as general housekeeper. On the very morning of the trial M. Vincent was reading a French paper when he noticed the paragraph which spoke of the

The gloves were stained with blood.

plate being left at a foreign hotel. In great indignation he showed the article to his partner, who passed the paper on to his wife. Madame Piolaine read the article, and then remarked that a former servant of theirs, whom she only knew as Jean, had left a parcel with her a few days before the Metropolis was startled by the dreadful fate of Lord Russell. Jean had asked her to look after the package for a few days, and had promised to call for it on the following Tuesday, but he had never returned to claim his property.

This news alarmed M. Vincent, who went at once for a solicitor, in whose presence the parcel was opened, when it was found to contain some spoons bearing the crest of the Bedford family, to which noble house Lord William belonged. Vincent was not a fool, and he saw at once the importance of this discovery, and without delay set out for the court with the intention of communicating his information to the solicitors for the prosecution. When he arrived, however, he found that the case had been adjourned till the day following, and therefore he had to drive to the lawyer's private house. A brief interview with the solicitor, an application before one of the London magistrates, sitting for the express purpose in his own dining-room, and subpœnas were issued for the attendance on the following morning of the hotel keepers and of Madame Piolaine.

All this took some time, and it was not till a few minutes before the court sat that the news of the discovery of the plate could be communicated to the advocates for Courvoisier. Written proof of the additional evidence was at once furnished to Phillips and Clarkson, so that they might discuss the question and formulate a plan which would save their client's neck. Up to the moment of receiving this statement the counsel for the defence believed implicitly in the innocence of their client, and when the prosecution gave them the depositions of Vincent and Piolaine they were struck dumb for a second or two. There was no time to be lost. The prisoner had already been placed in the dock, but the judges had not taken their seats on the bench. Just as Phillips was beginning to recover from the shock which he had received Courvoisier made a gesture to his counsel, indicating that he wanted to speak to his defenders.

Phillips and Clarkson drew near, expecting that Courvoisier would be able to explain the apparently damning find at the Hotel Dieppe. Judge, then, of their horror when the wretched prisoner leant over the dock and said, "I have sent for you, gentlemen, to tell you that I committed the murder." For a few moments Phillips could not speak, and when he regained his voice he said, "Of course, then, you are going to plead guilty."

"No, sir," was the calm reply. "I expect you to defend me to the uttermost."

This startling announcement completely upset Phillips; he did not know what to do. At first he wished to throw up his brief and leave the case entirely in the hands of his junior. From this course he was dissuaded by Clarkson, who assured him that to do so would be to consign his client to the gallows without even the semblance of a trial, and at the same time to violate the confidence which is always reposed in counsel by his clients. Phillips would not give in; accordingly, Clarkson suggested that the matter should be referred to Baron Parke, who sat on the bench as junior to Chief Justice Tindal, and to this course the leader agreed.

The baron heard the whole of the facts of the case, and then asked whether it was perfectly clear that the prisoner held Phillips to his bargain to defend him. "Yes," replied Phillips; "he insists that I shall continue to fight for his life." "Then," said Baron Parke, "you are bound to do so, and you must use all fair argument arising out of the evidence given on his behalf."

Phillips bowed to the ruling of his senior, and went back to court, but his position was a very painful one. He knew of his client's self-confessed guilt, his own innate sense of honour prevented him from telling lies, while his duty compelled him to skim the truth and attempt to turn all circumstances to his client's favour. Alas! the world heard later that Courvoisier had confessed his guilt to his advocate before the trial had ended, and criticised severely the speeches of Phillips. They did not know at the time that it was by order of the judge that Phillips had continued the defence, and for many months the counsel was abused and charged with intentional lying for the sake of gain. That Phillips did go further than he should there can be little doubt, but considering the sudden shock which he had received and remembering his hatred of deception, one cannot blame him.

As soon as the judges took their seats Inspector Tedman was put into the box. He gave his evidence very impartially, and with an obvious intention to colour nothing. He spoke to the bruises on the door, and said that in his opinion the marks at the top of the door had been done from the outside, while those at the bottom had been done from within. Questioned as to the discovery of the gloves and other articles in the prisoner's box on the second investigation, when he did not find them when first he examined the servants' baggage, he had little to say.

Possibly they were put there after the first search, was all that he would commit himself to. When cross-examined by Clarkson, the inspector admitted that there were very many more marks on the area door when he examined it a second time than when he first saw it. He could not say by whom the marks had been made. The prisoner's box had been left unlocked all the time that the unhappy man was awaiting examination before the magistrates, and the police had full access to it.

Following the inspector came a number of minor witnesses, who described the finding of the various articles which were taken from the wainscoting of the pantry and from Courvoisier's box. The subject of the marks on the woodwork was also thoroughly gone into, and it was established without a doubt that many of the bruises had been made by Inspector Pearce while experimenting to find out if it was possible for an entrance to be effected from the area. Pearce had also attempted to force Courvoisier to confess that he had committed the murder. Another officer, named Collier, declared positively that it was impossible for the officers who had searched Courvoisier's box on May 6 to have missed seeing the gloves and blood-stained handkerchiefs, and felt positive that they had been placed in the luggage subsequent to the arrest of the prisoner. There had been two minute searches of the box before the discovery of the articles—one official on May 6, and the second privately by Inspectors Shaw and Pearce on the 9th of the same month.

The police evidence made a very bad impression on the public at large. As we have before pointed out, the police were far from popular, and it is small wonder, then, that they were openly accused of manufacturing evidence against a prisoner in order to maintain their own credit. The public, of course, did not know what Parke, Phillips, and Clarkson did, and it appeared to the man in the street as if the Police Force, goaded to madness by the gibes which were daily hurled at them, had determined to prove Courvoisier guilty, whether he was or not.

The constables were followed by a string of witnesses, who only swore to the identity of the various articles which had been found, and after them Madame Piolaine was put into the box.

She told the jury how an old servant of hers, whom she knew as Jean, and whom she recognised as the prisoner, had come to her house and entrusted the parcel containing silver spoons to her care, promising to return in a day or so and reclaim it. She had no idea of the contents of the parcel, and it was not until she had seen the article in the French paper that her suspicions were in any way aroused, when she at once mentioned the matter to her husband, and they jointly called on a solicitor. The whole of Phillips's efforts were directed to shaking the evidence of this witness, although he knew that she was telling the truth, and the manner in which he attempted to discredit the Frenchwoman's testimony was afterwards brought up against him by his brothers of the long robe.

At first he complained that he had not had time to make inquiries as to the character of this new witness, and said that it was not fair to his client that he had not been supplied with at least the substance of the fresh evidence on the previous evening. In this contention he has been upheld by every jurist since 1840, but he went farther. Having no record of the character of the Piolaines and of Vincent, he said that the hotels round about Leicester Square did not hold an enviable reputation, and were little better than houses of ill-fame. That the witness's house was of that class he declared that he had no doubt, and asked the lady if she would not admit that her establishment was nothing better than a common gambling house and the resort of ladies of elastic morals.

With tears, poor Madame Piolaine denied that her house could be called a gambling house or a lupanar, and vowed that the two partners and herself had always preserved the strictest decorum in the conduct of the hotel. If necessary she would call the police to show what sort of a place she had. Phillips derided the idea of calling the police and said that they would wink at the matter.

He next suggested to the weeping witness that she could have communicated the existence of the parcel before, but had waited to see if she could get a larger reward. This she denied, and said that she had not the least idea that the parcel had anything to do with the case. Foiled on this point, Phillips next attacked the identification of the prisoner as the man who gave her the parcel, but madame held to her statement that Jean and Courvoisier were one and the same man, and to bear out her statement corroborative evidence was called which fully established the point. At this point the court rose for the day, and before Courvoisier was led down to the cells he sent to his advocate a message which ran: "Tell Mr. Phillips I consider my life in his hands."

When Mr. Phillips rose next morning to address the jury on behalf of his client, he found himself confronted with a task of no little delicacy. The jury, it is true, had no actual idea of the prisoner's guilt, and it was quite possible that a telling speech on his behalf by counsel might turn the balance and save Courvoisier's neck, but on the bench sat the judge who had dictated to Phillips the course which he should pursue and whose opinions as to what might fairly be said the advocate was in ignorance of. If he said too much, if he pressed the case too strongly for his client, he might be blamed, while if he did not make the best of the facts laid before him he was liable to be accused of unfairness to his client and to lose the whole of the professional reputation which he had built up with so much labour. Added to this was the feeling that as far as the world knew the crime must have been committed by one of the people in the house. Two were females, the third the prisoner. Of the prisoner's guilt he was certain; if he aspersed the characters of the two females, if he even managed to obtain an acquittal for his client, a stigma must rest on the names of the two defenceless women for the rest of their lives—a stigma which was undeserved and which he alone could remove.

Fully conscious of the position in which he was placed, Mr. Phillips commenced his speech to the jury. If it was not all that long study and many hours' consideration could have made it, at least it remains a monument to the great lawyer who had barely twenty-four hours in which to think over the matter.

For the first few minutes Mr. Phillips complained bitterly of the prejudice which had been shown by his adversary, Mr. Adolphus. He said that it was unwarrantable for the counsel for the prosecution to anticipate the defence which was to be offered; the prosecution had to concern itself solely with bringing the crime home to someone. As counsel for the defence, he (Mr. Phillips) was not called upon to show who it was who committed the awful crime; that was the task which the advisers of the Crown had taken upon themselves. It was not his place to cast aside the veil of night which hid the doings in that upper room.

Then the barrister gave utterance to the sentence which left a stain on his name for ever. "The Omniscient God Alone Knows Who Committed This Crime!" thundered out Mr. Phillips, doubtless carried away by the ready flow of words which is the Irishman's birthright.

Turning then to the evidence, Mr. Phillips asked the jury to discount the testimony of Sarah Mancer. He did not wish to asperse her character, nor that of any of the female servants; no breath of his should send them forth tainted to the world, but at the same time he did not think that Mancer had given any evidence which could fairly lead a reasonable person to suppose that Courvoisier had committed the murder. Take the expression which he admitted he had made use of—"I wish I had old Billy's money; I would not remain long in this country," the jury must admit that that was quite a natural sentiment for a Swiss who was longing for his own country to give utterance to. Further, the barrister urged that there was not the least motive for the crime. The prosecution had sug-

gested that plunder had led Courvoisier to commit the dreadful deed, but he felt sure they would recognise that Courvoisier had much better facilities for plunder while his deaf master was alive than if he was dead. The paltry nature of the matters stolen showed that plunder could not be the actual motive for the crime. Again, Courvoisier had frequent opportunities of escaping from the hands of the law, but he had not made the slightest use of them, and had quietly waited in the house until he was arrested.

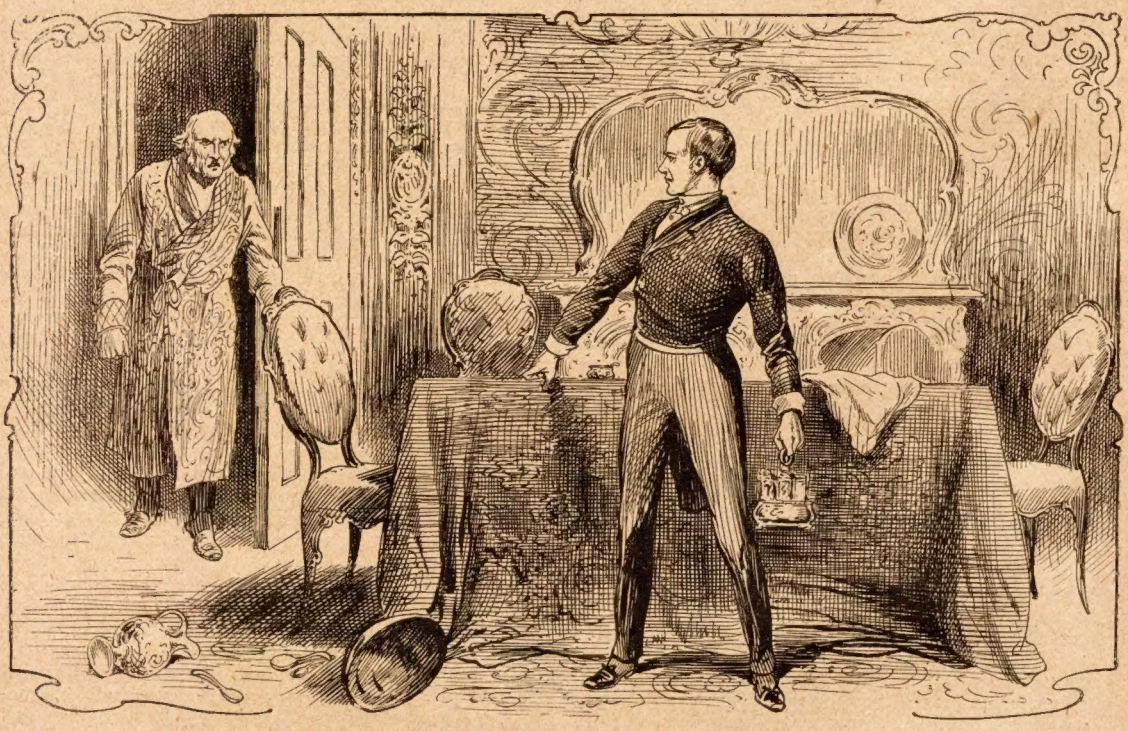
One of the police, whom he stigmatised as a man of weak intellect, had pointed to the prisoner's agitation as a proof of his guilt, but the learned counsel submitted that both the female servants had been equally agitated, and he regarded it as a clear proof of their innocence. (This last statement was also said to be overstepping the bounds which Baron Parke had laid down for Mr. Phillips.)

What then were the jury to think about the gloves and handkerchiefs found in the prisoner's box? Mr. Phillips submitted that after the first search the box should, according to law, have been sealed, but the police, who were terribly anxious to secure a conviction against someone, had left the box open. Two separate examinations had been made of the box and nothing had been found. Then came a third examination at a time when the prisoner was in gaol, and, to the astonishment of the police (?), blood-stained articles were found in the box. Who put these articles in that box? It was clear that the prisoner could not have done so. Baldwin had lied when on his oath; Pearce had suppressed a portion of his evidence and had attempted to intimidate the prisoner, and had admitted to the jury that he expected to share in the plunder which would be divided between the principal witnesses if Courvoisier was consigned to a felon's grave. Could not the jury believe that the police knew how those articles had been put in the prisoner's box?

On the person and clothes of the prisoner not a trace of blood had been found, nor had he a scratch such as one might naturally expect after murdering an old man. Further, it was remarkable that there had been no noise on the night of the 5th of May. The slightest movements of the prisoner could be heard through the lath and plaster partition which separated the prisoner's bedroom from that of his fellow-domestics, and the latter declared that they had heard nothing during the night.

The evidence of Madame Piolaine was more to the point. It did not prove that the prisoner had any inclination to murder, but it went to show that he might have committed robbery, and if that was the case did it not bear out what he had said before, when he said that Courvoisier was too cunning to murder the man he was plundering when he would have many more opportunities of pillage while his master was alive?

"I have not had time to prosecute inquiries into the character of Madame Piolaine," continued the lawyer, "but you know what the character of people who keep houses in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square is. I should have had intimation of the sort of evidence which was



ASKED HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING.

about to be brought before the court yesterday on the previous evening, so that I might be in a position to cross-examine properly. But the matter lies with you. Remember that to violate the living temple which the Lord has made, to quench the fire that His breath has given is an awful responsibility. The word once gone forth is irrevocable; speak not that word lightly. Speak it not on suspicion, however strong, on moral conviction, however cogent, on inference, on anything but a clear, irresistible, bright noonday certainty."

After this brilliant speech Mr. Phillips sat down, but it was evident to those in the court that the effort had been too much for him. For the remainder of the trial he sat with his head resting on his hands, the very picture of a man bowed down by care—and, may it be added, by shame.

After a short pause, Lord Chief Justice Tindal commenced his summing up, for there were no witnesses to call for the defence. The eminent judge left it to the jury to say whether the robbery and the murder were the work of the same person, and whether it was a genuine robbery at all. If thieves had really entered the house that night

they had pursued an unusual course, for they could have obtained access to the house by several easier methods than that which was taken. Through the glass door on the ground floor admittance could have been easily obtained; why then did the thief or thieves go to the trouble of letting themselves down over the high walls of the back area and effecting an entrance through the door in the basement, using considerable violence? Plunder was the apparent motive for the robbery; that being so did it not strike the jury as strange that the robbers had left behind them so many small articles which could easily have been concealed about their persons? In his experience, the Chief Justice never remembered a burglar tying up such tiny articles as pencil cases in a bundle.

The agitation of the prisoner and his remarks about wishing for his master's money were, according to the judge, of no account as evidence; the one was natural, the other mere kitchen gossip. The housemaid's evidence was credible, Baldwin's was totally untrue. Again, he would point out to the jury that at the searches which had been conducted all the prisoner's shirts had been spread out on the bed and examined; whence then did the articles found in them come? Could they possibly have been overlooked? Madame Piolaine's evidence disposed of the idea that the thieves had taken away any of the plate on the night of the murder, and disassociated the major crime from the minor. The articles found in the pantry wainscoting had been in the nobleman's room on the night before his death, and it did not seem likely that a stranger would have found them readily or have been able to secrete them in the places in which they had been found. With these remarks he dismissed the jury to their duty.

The impression in court was that the case had not been fully proved, and people were much excited as to the ultimate result of the trial. Half an hour, an hour, and an hour and a-half went by before the jury returned to the court-room. Then the judges were summoned, and the prisoner brought back from the cells below the court.

The Clerk of Arraigns read over the list of the jurors, and each answered to his name; then he said, "Gentlemen of the Jury, are you agreed upon your verdict?" To which the foreman answered, "We are."

"How do you find the prisoner—guilty or not guilty?" was the next question. "Guilty," said the foreman.

Turning to the wretched prisoner, the clerk then said, "Prisoner at the bar, you have been convicted of the crime of wilful murder by a jury of your peers. Have you anything to say why judgment to die should not be pronounced on you by this court in accordance with the law?"

"I have nothing to say," murmured the convict.

The Lord Chief Justice then assumed the black cap and proceeded to pass the last dread sentence of the law. He reminded the prisoner that he had been in a position of trust, and that he had betrayed that trust. His duty was to protect an old and feeble man, and instead of so doing he had foully done him to death. There could be no extenuation of his crime. It was deliberate, as was shown by the previous theft of certain articles of plate which he had deposited at a place whence he thought that he might regain them when suspicion was averted from him. By his act he had thrown suspicion on innocent servant girls, and so jeopardised their chances of obtaining their livelihood, and had arranged the lower rooms of the house in a manner to deceive the police and put them on a false scent. On the whole, he thought that the crime was one of the most premeditated type. He would not further harass the feelings of the prisoner, but would entreat him to nourish no hopes of pardon, inasmuch as no pardon could be granted. Then he impressively doomed the prisoner to die in the most dreadful formula known to our code of laws.

"Prisoner at the bar," said Chief Justice Tindal, "you have been convicted of the wilful murder of your aged master. The sentence of this court is that you be taken to the place from whence you came and thence to a place of execution, there to be hanged by the neck until you be dead, and your body be given to the surgeons for the purposes of dissection and anatomisation, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!" To which pious prayer the Chaplain of Newgate added, "Amen."

No sooner was he convicted than Courvoisier became an altered man. He paid great attention to the ministrations of the chaplain, who was in constant attendance, and attempted to prepare himself for the last great change which was so soon to take place for him. For several days the prisoner was not at all inclined to confess the justice of his sentence, but when he learnt that there was no hope of pardon for him, he saw that it was better for him to do justice to those who had lived in the house with him for so long. The following is the substance of his statement to the chaplain.

He said that he had formed a dislike to his place, but was greatly afraid to displease his friends by giving notice so soon after his appointment as valet to Lord William Russell. To get over this difficulty, he thought that he would commit a petty robbery, and thus be discharged; for he felt sure that Lord Russell would not proceed to the extremity of having him prosecuted for the act. It was his intention to return everything that he took from the house. On May 2 he took to the Hotel Dieppe some of the plate belonging to his master, and left it with Madame Piolaine, asking her to keep it for him. This plate he fully intended to call for on the following Tuesday. On that day, however, his master had occasion to reprimand him more than once, and when he had gone to bed Courvoisier went down to the ground floor and selected from the dining-room the articles which he thought would be the most likely for burglars to take. These articles he strewed over the floor, and while he was engaged in doing so his master came downstairs and asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was doing nothing, whereupon Lord William said that he would discharge him at once, and told him to leave on the following morning, adding that he should acquaint his friends of their relative's disgrace.

After this, Courvoisier went into the kitchen for a short time, and there thought over the matter. If he waited till the morning his character would be ruined for ever, but, like most criminals, he thought that he could evade the lesser evil by committing the greater. Under these circumstances, the valet imagind that by killing his master and attempting to lay the blame on burglars, he could escape from his position, and at the same time have a little ready-money to live on until he got another position.

It did not take long for him to make up his mind. He went into the kitchen and looked out the sharpest carving-knife. Then he proceeded to his master's bedroom, and, finding the old gentleman asleep, seized him rapidly by the top of the head, and with one sweep of the knife severed the windpipe and jugular vein. The blood spirted out all over the sheets, and Courvoisier was frightened. Fearing that he had not completely killed the old gentleman, the valet then cut deep into the throat for a second time, and nearly severed the head from the body. After this, he went downstairs, and threw some more pieces of plate about the floors, and tied up a selection of articles in the napkin. Wishing to make the burglary appear genuine, he next returned to his master's room, and took therefrom the valuables, which he hid in the pantry. The gloves, handkerchiefs, and shirt-front found in his box Courvoisier declared to the last were not his property, and had never been placed there by him. He therefore thought that as the police had suspected him, they had put them among his goods to assist them in obtaining a conviction and a share of the reward.

Thus far the confession of the convicted murderer went. Many years after the crime was committed a gentleman who was in the house opposite to No. 13, Norfolk Street, said that on the night of the murder he had seen a man, completely nude, washing himself in one of the rooms of Lord William Russell's house. He dared not

give evidence at the trial as by so doing he would have compromised a lady with whom he was intimate.

Courvoisier was duly led on to the scaffold in front of the debtors' door at Newgate, and was hanged in the presence of an enormous crowd of people. To the very last he preserved a brave demeanour. When the fatal noose was put around his neck, he turned to the chaplain, and said to him, "Sir, I have to thank God that He has brought me to a knowledge of the evil which I have done in this life. I admit the justice of my sentence, and pray for pardon for my sins. I do not know exactly what led me to kill my master, but I did so, and now am going to suffer the just punishment for my crime."

The executioner placed the straps round his ankles, and then retired below the drop. In a few seconds, the boarding fell with a sickening thud, and the body of Courvoisier hung from the blackened Newgate beam. The crowd, which was of enormous proportions, greeted the departure of the murderer from this world with hoots and groans, and, after the barbarous habits of those days, rejoiced in the judicial slaughter of a fellow man. For an hour all that was left of Courvoisier dangled from the gibbet, and then the common hangman stepped on to the platform again, and cut down the body of the murderer, which was afterwards given over to the doctors to be used in the anatomical rooms at the hospital.

It is worthy of note that William Makepeace Thackeray, the great novelist, was one of the spectators at the execution of Courvoisier, and wrote his little sketch entitled, "On going to see a man hanged," as a memento of his gruesome morning's experience. Though he appealed to the Government to abolish the exhibition of death, he appealed in vain, for it was not till twenty-seven years later that the disgusting scenes which used to accompany public executions were done away with.

This case is remarkable, not so much for the dignity of the victim, as for the peculiarities which attended the trial. Prior to this no trial had occurred where the prisoner had openly informed his counsel that he was guilty, and still demanded that he should stick to his bargain to defend him. Mr. Phillips was exposed to all sorts of scurrilous attacks for his conduct of the case. Some say that he should have adhered to his original resolution and thrown up his brief; but in view of the directions which were given to him by his superior, Baron Parke, we cannot agree with these people. He had to do what he was engaged to do, for to have given up the cause at that moment would have been tantamount to confessing his client's guilt, and so taking from the jury their prerogative. The matter was regarded thus by no small number of papers, but some there were who attacked the learned counsel for his speech on behalf of Courvoisier. They said that at the very time that he knew well that his client was guilty he had declared that God alone knew who committed the murder, and charged Phillips with evading the truth to gain money. No more heartless charge could have been made, for Phillips was the soul of honour. When the first paper containing this charge was published Phillips, in despair, went to the two judges who had tried the case, and asked them if they remembered him saying anything of the kind. Baron Parke said that he was sure the learned counsel had not thus committed himself, but the Lord Chief Justice was not certain on the matter as far as the actual words went, but added that he was sure that Phillips would never have said such a thing intending it to bear the meaning attributed to it, and said that he would be his witness wherever and whenever he was wanted. To this authoritative statement Baron Parke, who, by the way, was afterwards made Lord Wensleydale, added that he had followed the advocate's speech very carefully, knowing of the prisoner's guilt, and had made sure that the bounds of strict advocacy had not been overstepped.

There is another point worthy of notice in the case. The conduct of the police is far from blameless. With the exception of Inspector Tedman, throughout the whole investigation it was marked by a cruel attempt to fix the guilt on a man whom the police thought ought to be guilty. There is not the slightest doubt that if the evidence of the Piolaines had not cropped up when it did there could have been no conviction. There is also no reasonable cause for doubting that the garments, spotted with blood, which were found in the criminal's box, were put there by members of the Police Force with a view to strengthening their case. Nowadays such a gross piece of injustice could not happen, and the evidence of the police is rarely tinged with prejudice.

Altogether, there is much that is instructive in the career of Courvoisier. It brings out so clearly the faults which the murderer is apt to make. Had Courvoisier thought how he would act if he had been a burglar before he left the evidences of the false burglary, he would have remembered that all portable articles would naturally be carried on the person and not tied up in a bundle; he would have seen that the marks which were supposed to have been made by the intruders were made from the outside, and not from the inside; he would have made sure that the very articles which were stolen were not those which were only known to the dead nobleman's valet, and would have taken care that the place selected for their concealment was one to which all the members of the household had ready access.

Till his death Phillips carried with him the stigma of having attempted to defeat the ends of justice by lying, and it is but fair to the memory of a great lawyer to emphasise the fact that those who were intimately connected with the case from beginning to end, including judges, jury, and counsel, tried to impress on the public the fact that, whatever the eminent criminal advocate said, he never overstepped the bounds of truth. The majority of authorities quote the passage in his speech, saying that God alone knew whether Courvoisier was guilty or not, exactly as we have quoted it, but the judges deny that he did so, and many of his colleagues follow their example. Anyhow, those who knew Phillips well assert emphatically that he was incapable of uttering a falsehood, and declare that it was only on the express insistence of Baron Parke that he agreed to continue the defence of Courvoisier.

"Sweeney Todd."

SEEING that Mr. John Lanson is responsible for a sensational and cleverly-performed music-hall sketch, on the subject of this legendary miscreant, and that many people believe implicitly in his having once had existence, our readers may be interested to know that there never was "any sich person."

His "Character!"

A WELL-KNOWN and notorious murderer, who flourished some fifty years back, was being exercised in the yard attached to the prison where he was confined in the interval separating the first and second days of his trial.

Noticing a pile of heavy stones in one corner of the open space, he made a sudden dash for them, and, seizing a huge flint, threatened with instantaneous death the first warder who came near him.

With the utmost difficulty, and after a tremendous struggle, he was disarmed; but he had seriously hurt one of his gaolers in the process, and the governor of the prison severely admonished him on his disgraceful conduct.

"Well," said the ruffian, with an oath, "that cove who is doing the prosecuting dodge agin me give me an awful character in court yesterday, and I felt I must do somethin' to deserve it!"

With this number we present a Supplement on which will be found the first instalment of our entrancing "LIFE OF CHARLES PEACE," which we feel certain will make our readers want more. This week we have only given a small sample; next week eight pages will be devoted to the doings of the VILLAINOUS CHARLEY, whose crimes form a chronicle far more exciting than any novel, and have provided authors with numberless plots.

The Life of

CHARLES PEACE

FROM THE ONLY EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MALEFACTOR IN THE POSSESSION OF THE POLICE.

"Famous Crimes" Edition.

INTRODUCTION.

CHARLES PEACE, alias John Ward, whose life and adventures form the subject-matter of our story, gained for himself a reputation equal, if not superior, to the lawless ruffians, Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, and others of a similar class. He was a union of various elements. In more senses than one he was a character. Born in Sheffield, he was, in early days, trained according to the customs of the day, and when about eight or ten years of age was one of the foremost amongst his companions in any game of audacious fun.

He was always considered a "rough," even amongst his earlier associates, and it is said that he was dreaded by the children with whom he played. At ten years of age he had to assist his father, who was named Joseph Peace, in the earning of the daily bread for the family.

Mr. Joseph Peace was a man well respected. He was what is known in Sheffield as a "little master," but in commercial terms would be placed as a "file manufacturer." He had a large family, and amongst his children was this lad, who achieved such notoriety in the world.

Charles Peace, from his very boyhood, was wild. It is said that there was no adventure to be undertaken in regard to which he had any fear; neither did he require twice telling when he was requested to lead the way in any mischievous plot.

As he grew up, Charles was distinguished for his devotion to the fair sex. As his good fortune grew, so did the number of inamoratas increase, yet he never seems to have really deserted the wife whom he married.

In housekeeping his taste was luxurious, and he invariably moved into more aristocratic neighbourhoods as he prospered in the art and mystery of burglary.

How does it happen, then, that he could settle down to the life of a picture-frame maker at Sheffield?

The circumstances would not be so mysterious if he had not really made picture-frames; but it appears that he actually worked at the trade. There is some mystery here which requires to be explained. It is difficult to believe Peace turned honest in a fit of repentance; he would, in all probability, have some other object, which has not yet been made clear.

There appears to have been a singular absence of motive, both for his general conduct and the murder which he committed. Instead of being the ingenious and cautious Charles Peace of the London burglaries, he was simply an indiscreet and violent criminal.

Equally in contrast was his behaviour on the two occasions when he appeared in the prisoners' dock. In London he was whining and supplicatory; in Sheffield he was reckless and defiant. This change may, perhaps, be accounted for on the grounds that he had a chance in one case, and no chance in the other; but other contradictions in his character are not so easily explained.

His career was almost unique in the annals of crime. Not only the boldness and skill which he showed in committing his depredations, but his remarkable success in eluding the vigilance of the police, must be regarded as being altogether uncommon. Working entirely alone in his burglarious course, he seemed to command success.

We are told that even dogs felt the influence of his power, and failed to give any alarm on his approach. As for locks, bolts, and other means of security, Peace simply laughed at them. If he made up his mind to get into a house he got into it, and the booty which he appropriated was exceedingly valuable.

Scarcely less remarkable than his success as a burglar was the skill with which he contrived to escape detection by the police. Although he had been living openly in London, walking even into Scotland Yard itself, he was not recognised as Mr. Dyson's murderer; and his eventual detection was owing to the accident of his capture at Blackheath.

Peace certainly possessed remarkable ability in effecting an almost impenetrable disguise. He has boasted of his contempt for the police, and his confidence seems to have been abundantly justified.

The personal appearance of Peace was thus described by one who paid a visit to Newgate while the burglar was awaiting his trial. He was a man about 5ft. 3in., with white hair on his head, cut very close, and bald in front of the head.

His eyebrows were heavy and overhanging the eyes, which were deeply sunk in their sockets; a chin standing very prominently—and, as if to make it more so, the head was thrown back with an air of half self-assertion, yet half caution.

In addition he wore a pair of large brass-rimmed spectacles. Peace was professedly a religious man. The neighbourhood thought him so, and probably he thought so, too; so he associated with the good folk who congregated in the church, but never made himself conspicuous.

He trifled with Fate. She had made him rich in worldly goods, although they were not his own. Some idea of the magnitude of his operations may be gathered from the fact that there is evidence in the hands of the police that would convict him of no less than fifty burglaries.

The property he obtained is valued at several thousand pounds, but the burglar as a rule does not realise even one-fourth of the value of the property he appropriates.

The career of the notorious culprit whose doings are chronicled in this work furnishes the novelist with a moral. It will be clearly demonstrated to those who peruse these pages that, sooner or later, justice overtakes the guilty, and that it is impossible for the most astute and cunning scoundrel—such as Peace has proved himself to be—to escape punishment.

CHAPTER I.

Our first scene opens at a picturesque-looking farmhouse situated on the outskirts of a pretty little village within a few miles of Hull. Oakfield Farmhouse—so called from a number of patriarchal oaks poising their lofty heads in the rear of the establishment—was in the occupation of two substantial yeomen named respectively John and Richard Ashbrook, their only sister Maude being mistress of the bright and cheerful abode.

In the earlier portion of the day our two Yorkshire farmers had been out on a shooting expedition. They brought back with them two friends—fellow-sportsmen. They were driven home by the rain, which fell in torrents, and rendered further sport impracticable.

"I knowed how it would be," said Richard Ashbrook to his companions. "These beastly river fogs always bring wet, and the clouds have been as 'bengy' (full of rain) for some time—as bengy as could be."

When the party reached Oakfield their garments were saturated with wet, and clung to them like a second skin.

"I have got a fire in the big bedroom—a good blazing fire—for I guessed how it would be," said Maude Ashbrook, as she received her guests at the door. "You'll all of you have to change your things. Mercy on us, you are dripping wet, John!" she exclaimed, placing her hand on her brother's shoulder.

"Our friends will stop and have a morsel of something to eat and drink for the matter o' that," observed Richard.

"Indeed no, I think not," said Mr. Jamblin, one of the farmer's companions.

"Ah, but he will," returned the farmer. "None of yer think nots. Come, friends, get thee in. We don't intend to part with thee so easily."

Mr. Jamblin smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and obeyed. The other friend of the farmer's, a Mr. Cheadle by name, followed Jamblin.

After dinner had been served, "clean glasses and old corks" were festively proposed by the host. Some bottles of genuine spirits and a box of Havannas were placed on the board; an animated discussion on things agricultural and political followed, while ever and anon Jamblin and Cheadle would rise from their seats, repair to the window, and, flattening their noses against the panes thereof, would endeavour to distinguish a star in the sky, or the first beams of the rising moon.

But the sky remained black and gloomy, and continual pattering of the rain was distinctly heard.

"It's no good, my fine fellows," observed Richard Ashbrook. "You are in for it. The rain has set in for good, so you had better make up your minds to stop where you are. 'Any port in a storm,' as my uncle the captain used to say. Nobody will ever expect you home, such a night as this."

"You are very kind, Ashbrook, but——"

"Oh, bother your buts! I tell you I've got a couple of beds for ye. They are small iron bedsteads, both in the same room; but you don't mind roughing it for one night, surely."

The farmer's two friends accepted the offer, and prepared themselves to pass the hours merrily. This they had no difficulty in doing.

Several games of whist were played, after which the host was called upon for a song. He was not quite in tune, but that did not matter. The other singers were equally deficient

"WELL, JANE, WHAT'S UP NOW, LASS?"

in that respect; but what was wanting in skill was made up by noise.

Most of the ditties had a good, rattling chorus, which each singer interpreted according to his own fancy. After sundry libations and much protestation of friendship and good-fellowship, the hour arrived for repose, and the two farmers, their visitors, and Maude betook themselves to their respective sleeping apartments.

As Richard, who was the last, was about to ascend the stairs, he was touched gently on the elbow by a tall, long-haired young woman, who was one of the domestics in the establishment.

"Well, Jane, what's up now, lass?" inquired the farmer.

"Hush, master! This way!" She drew him back towards the entrance to the kitchen, and said in a low, mysterious tone of voice, "Are the guns loaded?"

"Two of them are. But what of that?"

"Load the others."

"Why, dash it! what ails thee, girl?"

"Nothing, master. I can't tell why, but I feel timorsome like, and fancy something bad is going to happen."

"If loading the other guns will do thee any good, the remedy is easy enough," observed the good-natured farmer, who at once proceeded to charge the other weapons.

"Thanks, Mr. Richard, thanks!" exclaimed the girl, in a tone of evident satisfaction.

The farmer repaired to his bedroom, taking the two guns—his own and his brother's—with him. At his suggestion his two friends had carried up their weapons into their bedroom in the earlier portion of the evening. This might appear a little singular, but John Ashbrook had playfully observed to Cheadle and Jamblin that there was sometimes a hare to be seen out of the bedroom window, feeding on the orchard grass of a morning.

"And so," he observed jocosely, "if you see one to-morrow morning you will, of course, be able to knock him over."

"We will do our best should there be one," said both gentlemen.

In less than half-an-hour after the party had broken up all the inmates of Oakfield House were soundly sleeping.

All save one.

This was Jane Ryan, the girl who had exchanged a few parting words with her master, or, more properly speaking, with one of her masters, for John and Richard Ashbrook were partners.

A strange sense of coming evil had taken possession of the girl, who sat moodily and dejected in the kitchen long after the other members of the household had retired to rest. Jane did not feel disposed to seek repose; she was restless and disturbed, albeit she was quiet, moving from place to place in a stealthy way, in direct variance with her usual manner.

"I cannot sleep," she murmured, "and so I will e'en keep watch for one hour or more."

She put some fresh coals on the kitchen fire, before which she sat for some time absorbed in thought.

Leaving her there, we will take a survey of the exterior of the house and its surroundings.

It was two o'clock in the morning. The rain had ceased; the moon was shining brightly, and covered the fields with a pale, lustrous light; the stars sparkled in the rain-drops which were hanging from the leaves, and so clothed the trees with a mantle of diamonds.

All was silent in the fields, for the birds and insects of the night were torpid till summer came once more. All was silent in the yard—the cattle sleeping on their beds of straw, and the fowls upon their wooden perches.

Seen by the pale moonlight, the old farm-house was a picture worthy of an artist's pencil.

On the northern side of Oakfield ran a narrow lane, skirted by a dense mass of foliage, which threw the lane into sombre darkness. The lane itself rose abruptly as it neared the farm, which stood on the upland.

In this lane the forms of three men might be seen. The first of these was Charles Peace. Standing facing him was the notorious "cracksman," Ned Gregson, better known by the name of the "Bristol Badger." The last of the three was known as "Cooney"; he was a tinker by trade, but he was a sort of jackal to rogues of a greater degree than himself.

The three men were in close converse. They had come suddenly to a halt, as if doubtful as to their course of action.

"I tell yer it's right as the mail," observed the tinker in a tone of confidence. "The farmers have sold their wheat, and there's a mighty good 'swag' in the house. Only, yer see, Ned, old boy, yer must not be too rash. Be keerful—be very keerful."

"What do yer mean?" inquired the Badger.

"Well, it's just this, old man, the farmers—leastways, so I heard at the 'Six Bells'—have had two blokes with 'em to-day, a-poppin' at the blessed birds, bad luck to them; and from what I could gather from Tim the two blokes are a-stoppin' there to-night."

"What matters about that?" said Peace. "We don't intend to wake the gentlemen."

"All right, so much the better," answered the tinker. "I'm for doing things in a quiet sort of way, I am."

The Badger uttered an oath, and his ill-favoured countenance wore an expression of disgust.

"Do you know where they keep the shiners?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; I think that'll be all right. I haven't been in the house to mend the bell wires without a-keeping my eyes open. Ha! ha!"

"Stow that, yer fool!" exclaimed the Badger. "Wait till yer out of the wood afore yer laugh."

"All right, Ned; I'm as silent as the grave."

"When were you at 'The Bells,' then?" inquired Peace.

"I had a game of skittles this afternoon."

"At what time?"

"Between three and four o'clock; or it might be a little later. Can't say to half-an-hour or so."

"And that's how you came to know about these two sporting chaps?"

"Right you are. Tim gave me the tip."

"You haven't been fool enough to push your inquiries too far?" said Peace. "Tim, as you call him, might suspect."

"He suspect!" returned the tinker indignantly. "Not he! I was as good as gold."

"It's no use making a long palaver about the matter," ejaculated Gregson. "Let's to business."

The three burglars made direct for Oakfield House. In the space of a few minutes they were busily at work to effect an entrance, but they found this by no means so easy a task as they had imagined. The windows and doors of the habitation were carefully secured, and although they knew it not at the time, there was one inmate of the establishment keenly alive to every movement.

This was Jane Ryan, who was aroused from her lethargic reverie before the kitchen fire by a sound which was new to her ears.

Jane started and rose from her seat.

"I said something was about to happen," she murmured, pressing her hand against her side. "I could have taken a Bible oath of it."

She paused for a few moments, apparently in doubt as to what course to take; presently she appeared to have decided upon her line of action. She glided from the room with long, stealthy, and noiseless steps, carrying her shoes in her hand.

A sudden surprise awaited her two young masters.

They were awoke from their sleep by a hand placed upon their shoulders. They stared around them sleepily, as yet not realising the real state of affairs. It was dark in their bedroom, for the moon was behind a cloud.

When it gleamed out they saw Jane Ryan standing before them. Her arms were naked to the shoulder; her eyes glistened with a strange light.

She held a loaded gun in her hands.

The Ashbrooks were perfectly bewildered when they beheld this strange apparition awaking them in the silent hours of the night.

"Jane!" exclaimed Richard Ashbrook, suddenly calling to his mind the warning given him in the earlier part of the night by his faithful and devoted servant. "Jane, what's the matter? Speak, girl!"

"Hush!" she murmured, placing her finger on her lips; "make no noise, or it may be fatal. Listen!"

Both the farmers listened till their ears tingled, but they could hear nothing. A thought crossed the minds of both almost simultaneously, that the girl was (to use the expression they made use of afterwards) off her head. The brothers stared at each other in mute astonishment.

"I can't hear anything," said John Ashbrook.

"Don't speak, master, but watch and wait; you will hear," said Jane in a low whisper.

She was standing as if in anxious expectation, one hand raised to her ear, the other grasping the fowling-piece. The two Ashbrooks listened again, and as the moonlight ebbed slowly from the room like a great white wave streaming back towards the sea, they heard a thin scraping sound, which was unlike anything they had heard before. This mysterious sound was followed by deep and heavy blows.

"Are you satisfied now?" said the maid.

"What is it?" they inquired.

She answered in a low, hoarse voice:

"Robbers, burglars, assassins!"

The two farmers stole hastily but silently from their beds. Jane immediately left the room.

They at once proceeded to arouse Mr. Cheadle and Jamblin. All this was done as noiselessly as possible. When the four men were up and dressed, Maude Ashbrook joined them, declaring that she would not leave the side of her brothers upon any consideration.

They left the door wide open, and all crouched together in a corner.

The sound of the burglars' tools soon ceased—a sign that they were worked by practised hands.

Indeed, no more skilful "cracksmen" existed at this time than Charles Peace, the Badger, and Cooney—the two first-named men have never been surpassed.

The farmers and their friends silently awaited the movements of the robbers, who had, without doubt, by this time effected an entrance into the house.

The party in the bedroom stood prepared for any emergency; they all cocked their guns.

"Let us have no firing, except in self-defence," said Mr. Cheadle. "There are four able-bodied men here, and it must go hard with us if we cannot hold our own."

"I shan't be at all particular about peppering the scoundrels, whoever they may be," returned John Ashbrook. "A set of lawless midnight marauders. Fellows of their stamp do not deserve pity or consideration."

They now heard muffled footsteps in the room beneath them, and immediately afterwards similar sounds were heard on the stairs.

They began to breathe a little quicker, and grasped their guns more tightly. A gleam of light fell across the threshold.

They could see a slipper lying there—one that Maude had dropped.

The burglars had probably perceived this, and thence argued that people were afoot, for the light disappeared, and they could hear whisperings outside the door.

The big bedroom, as it was called, was a square chamber, barely furnished. The two bedsteads had been placed close to the window on the left-hand side.

Round about these beds the six besieged persons were crouched or seated.

The moonlight poured in at the window in such a manner that while the whole of the opposite side, except one corner, was as light as day, the little nook by the beds was buried in impenetrable darkness.

The one dark corner on the opposite side was formed by the chimney, which jutted out some little way into the room.

They listened breathlessly for some moments, till they fancied that they heard a board creak inside the room close to the door; and at that moment, as if by magic, a voice issued from the corner of the chimney.

"We are armed with loaded revolvers; if you come a step nearer we fire!"

The lurid flash of a pistol flamed within the room, and they heard a ball strike sharply against the wall.

Maude betrayed their hiding-place with a shriek, and fell fainting in her brother John's arms.

A loud report rang in their ears, and the room was filled with a thick, sulphurous smoke.

By the light of the powder's flame when the first shot was fired, there was one who had seen the robber's face—a face, once seen, not soon to be forgotten. The dark, cavernous eyes of the "Badger" had been distinctly visible to Jane Ryan, who gave a scream of triumph and revenge.

It was but momentarily that she had caught sight of the forbidding features of the miscreant; but it was enough for her purpose.

She levelled her master's gun at the spot where she supposed the robber was; and as she fired something fell heavily upon the floor.

This is only a taste of CHARLES PEACE. Next week a full dose of eight pages will be given.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE now come to one of the very oldest methods of taking the life of one who has forfeited his right to live—namely, beheading. From the earliest times this means of executing justice appealed to law-givers, and is to be found inscribed in every one of the ancient codes. There is something so very satisfactory in beheading a felon; the deed, once done, is final, and there can be no fear of the malefactor coming to life again. Accompanied by proper pageantry, the ceremony of decapitating offenders can be made most impressive, and should strike terror into would-be wrong-doers. In his death the criminal can be made of use to the State. At the same time, there is something dignified in this primitive method of punishing the evil-doer. The State has to slay him, and elects to do so in a complete, though simple, fashion, disdaining to add torture of any kind to his sentence.

Why has beheading always been so popular? That is a hard question to answer. Possibly it is because the animal instinct in man delights to see the red blood flow, the spectacle of a decapitation affording just sufficient of the gory without providing any of the revolting; possibly some notion that in the head of man lay hid his real self has influenced races in their choice of this mode of inflicting the capital punishment; or again, its efficacy may have given it the pre-eminence over other modes of judicial death, for though men have recovered after hanging, have survived crucifixion and the wheel, nay, have been proof against poison and the flames of the furnace, the pages of history contain no account of the axe or sword failing.

To decide which was the first weapon with which this punishment was inflicted would be to settle the vexed question as to whether man first made use of the stone axe or the stone sword, a problem that has puzzled archæologists for ages, and so we must be content with the knowledge that as soon as man knew of the properties of cutting instruments, so soon did he utilise them in the infliction of death.

In the history of beheading we find that all cases can be classed under one of three heads—decapitation with the sword, decapitation with an axe, and decapitation by means of some mechanical contrivance. In theory, at least, all three methods are in force to this day. The sword is the instrument of death in China, in parts of Prussia, and in some of the Cantons of Switzerland; the axe is still supposed to be employed in Brunswick; while for mechanical decapitation we have the famous guillotine, which is the legal means of executing criminals in France, Belgium, and several other countries.

Decapitation with the sword has been in favour from very early times. The classics contain frequent references to executions which were carried out summarily with the weapon which every citizen carried. Throughout Europe the use of the sword was fairly general till a little more than a century ago, when the guillotine was introduced, and the headsmen were wonderfully expert at their revolting business. Indeed, it was the boast of one of the Sansoms, that family of hereditary executioners, that he never had a mishap at any of his executions, and he could number some hundreds of them, and that only on very few occasions had he to strike more than one blow.

In those days there was a certain etiquette on the scaffold, and nobles were permitted to meet their deaths standing, if they so desired, while the common folk knelt to receive the stroke. The headsman's sword was a heavy, two-handled instrument, something after the fashion of those which the Crusaders are represented as carrying. It had a double edge and was highly tempered. Even with this powerful weapon a strong man was needed to strike the head from off a standing man with one blow.

To witness an execution with the sword nowadays we will go to China, for the capital penalty is so rarely enforced in Europe in those countries which profess to employ the historic instrument that more than a lifetime might be wasted in waiting for an execution to take place.

Outside most of the large towns in the Land of the Dragon is to be seen a plot of ground, which the natives look askance at as they pass. It is devoid of grass or shrub, and looks bare and desolate. The sun beats down on its clay soil, and overhead may be seen circling hawks and other birds of prey. It is the execution ground, and on it the life-blood of countless human beings has spurted from severed arteries and veins.

On an execution morning—and they are plentiful in some parts of China—since daybreak a crowd of jabbering Chinese has been drawn up round the bare patch of ground, talking, gesticulating, and speculating on their own chances of figuring as principals on that blood-stained spot some fine day. Death has no horrors for the average yellow man; he regards it as an incident, nothing more. Presently the beating of drums and cymbals is heard, and from out the city gate comes a ragged procession. These are the notabilities of the district, some on horses, some borne in palanquins or sedan chairs. At the tail of the procession rides a fat mandarin in his chair of State. He is easily distinguished from the lesser officials by the coloured button on his cap, and, if he be a great mandarin, by the peacock feather with which his headdress is ornamented. Lazily fanning himself, he is borne to a spot opposite the centre of the clear space. Silence is then commanded, and an ode, expressive of the mandarin's good qualities, or of his supposed virtues, is recited by some sycophantic courtier. That done, the great man gives the word for the prisoners to be produced.

Again the sound of barbaric music is heard, and some of the tatterdemalion soldiery retained by the mandarin drag forth several wretches who have been adjudged worthy of death. Before each culprit is borne a placard on which is inscribed the offence of which he has been found guilty, and for which he is to suffer. The convicts do not seem oppressed by their impending doom; on the contrary, they look round them in a dazed manner, and scarcely appear to realise the position in which they stand. This is probably due to the large dose of opium which has been administered to them by their gaolers some short time before.

Their hands are bound behind them, and included in the cord is a strangely-shaped piece of wood—omitted in certain districts—on which are inscribed a few charms to aid the spirit in its passage. Each culprit is provided with a mat on which to kneel. Standing before this, they say farewell to their relations, and promise to look after their interests in the shadowy world to which they are journeying. Then they salute the mandarin and kneel down.

The executioner's staff is a large one, for it consists of as many subordinates as there are culprits, as well as an extra attendant or so to carry swords. The headsman in chief is a powerful Chinese, who has gained much experience in decapitating his fellows, and who practises regularly on sheep when proper victims are scarce.

The condemned, being placed in position on the mats, an assistant grasps the pigtail of each and pulls it slightly, to steady the head. Then the executioner selects a sword. With a couple of strides, he reaches the first criminal; the heavy blade flashes in the air, and instantaneously the doomed man's head seems to leap towards the assistant, for, the neck being severed, the strain on the pigtail gives the impetus. Before we have realised what has happened, we look again and see that the headsman is at the third victim, so rapidly does he do his work. After the third culprit has been slain the executioner changes his sword, and attacks the next three, and so on until he has worked his way through the batch handed over to him for execution. In no case is more than a single blow required. Fascinated, we watch the corpse of the last man decapitated. Contrary to our expectation, we notice that though great jets of blood flow from the severed neck, the kneeling figure does not fall to the ground for some seconds; then it seems to collapse all of a heap. The spouting arteries tell us that the heart does not stop beating for some little time after death has taken place. At the moment of severance the head seems to give a little leap forward.

The corpses of the slain are allowed to lie on the scene of execution till nightfall, and then the relatives are permitted to take them away for interment.

Here it may be noted that single executions are rather rare in China, the custom being to keep the prisoners waiting until there is a sufficient number to be slain to make quite a ceremony. Men of importance, however, who have been condemned to be beheaded, are made an exception to

THE GUILLOTINE AT WORK.

A scene at a provincial execution in France.

this rule, and are accorded the privilege of being the sole malefactor on the execution ground.

England may be said to have been the land where the axe attained its greatest popularity. Of course, in Roman days it was frequently in use, but it was not so popular as it was with us. The Roman magistrates were preceded by their lictors, carrying axes and rods, and decapitation was meted out to serf and patrician alike. In Merrie England only folk of high degree perished by the axe, knaves and villains were hanged like dogs. Hence it was popular, and many of our noblest families recount with pride to this day how certain of their ancestors were executed with axe and block.

The procedure was simple enough. In some public place, save in rare instances, a scaffold was erected. On it was a block with hollows to receive the chin and the shoulders, one on each side. The scaffold was littered with straw, much as shambles used to be strewn. Perhaps there was a coffin on the scaffold, or that grim emblem of death was in a hearse, round the nearest corner, waiting for its occupant. Tower Hill and Smithfield Market were the most general places for executions of this kind in London, and in the provinces the city square or the market place was usually selected.

All around were crowds of people, gathered together to see the doomed man meet his end, for the malefactor was generally attainted of some political offence and had sympathisers among the common people. To preserve order the soldiery were present, great bearded men, with pike and battle-axe and lance, who laughed and joked with the populace, and swore round oaths and bore themselves bravely.

Presently cries of "Here they come!" were heard, and as the crowd parted the sheriff's javelin-men could be seen heading the procession. Then came soldiers, the sheriffs, and a coach containing the noble sinner who had to pay for his misdeeds with his life. We notice that chains and ropes and manacles are remarkable by their absence. The culprits were gentlefolk, who accepted death as the price of failure, and required no restraint of gyves or cord. They went to their doom in a dignified manner. Seated in the carriage with the condemned was a minister of his own faith, with whom he conversed, it may be about the next world, it may be concerning the care of those whom he was about to leave behind him.

Arrived at the foot of the scaffold, the javelin-men surrounded it, and the military took up position near the little platform, on to which stepped the doomed, the minister, and a few officials and friends.

There was no sign of hurry, the principals chatting with one another as if they had no really serious business in hand. Beside the block stood a tall man, dressed entirely in red or black, and wearing a mask. He was leaning on a massive axe, for he was the headsman, and he knew that if he were to betray the least nervousness he would be hooted by the crowd. Minutes passed away and often nearly an hour was gone before the figures on the scaffold made any pretence to notice the presence of the crowd. Then the doomed man would advance to the edge of the scaffold, and instantly the murmur of the crowd was hushed, and absolute silence reigned, save for the clanking of the horses' bridles and the stamp of a hoof.

With great dignity the dying man then addressed the people. The form of nearly all these last speeches was the same. The culprit acknowledged that he had been guilty of treason, regretted that he had been caught, prayed that the sovereign might have a long life, and then moralised a little on his approaching end.

That done he returned to his friends behind the block. Then the headsman came forward and, kneeling, asked forgiveness for what he was about to do. It was customary for the victim to grant this, at least in words, and to bestow upon the executioner a sum of money. He also generally made arrangements as to a signal for the fatal blow. Still preserving his composure the doomed man began to take off his upper garments, and to give articles as keepsakes to those who stood around him; to this one a snuff-box, to that his prayer-book, to a third the stars of the orders he wore. A word or two with the minister followed, the mob preserving a becoming stillness. After shaking hands all round, the prisoner next knelt before the block, and the headsman gripped his heavy axe.

The silence became so intense that almost the heart could be heard beating. Seconds drag on, the executioner swinging the fearsome weapon the while. Then a signal is given, and the next instant the ponderous cleaver whistled through the air and descended on the neck. The crowd groaned, for the head was not severed. A second blow was necessary, and, trembling with fear, the headsman dealt it. With a thud, the head fell on the straw-covered planks. Then an assistant came forward, and, raising the bloody head, handed it to the executioner, who advanced to the corner of the scaffold.

Holding it up, dripping with gore, he exclaimed: "This is the head of a traitor!" At each corner he exhibited the ghastly relic, and repeated the same formula. The remains of the executed man were then either handed over to the relatives for burial, or were interred by the Crown, and the traitor's head stuck on a spike on London Bridge, or in some other public place.

Women also perished beneath the axe if they were adjudged guilty of treachery or of any of the serious crimes which are now considered felonies, but which were then held to be treason, and they did not all meet death with composure. Indeed, some of them gave the executioner a lot of trouble. For instance, the Countess of Salisbury, a dame of some seventy years of age, flatly refused to lay her head on the block, and bade the headsman "fetch it off if he wanted it." Seeing that the old lady meant what she said, the executioner set to work to chop her head off as she was standing. The first blow caught her on the neck, but did not inflict any serious injury. Then the old lady commenced to run round the scaffold, the headsman pursuing her and chopping at her whenever he got a chance. Time after time he dealt blows at her, but her ladyship was agile, wonderfully so for her age, and evaded the axe. At last, however, the executioner managed to get a blow in which split her head open, and she fell to the ground. Amid the hooting of the mob the execution was then ended, and the gory and mangled head exposed to the people as the head of a traitress.

In the Tower of London are preserved the axe and block which were used in despatching a whole host of notabilities who had been found guilty of treason.

Of machines for decapitating malefactors the Maid of Halifax and the Scottish Maiden are the earliest examples. The principle on which they worked was identical with that of the guillotine, namely, a heavily-weighted blade, suspended above the criminal's neck, being caused to descend at a given signal. In the case of the Halifax instrument the ponderous blade was kept suspended by means of a cord, at the end of which was a peg, fitting into a hole in the scaffold, and so arranged that when the peg was with drawn the axe fell. This was taken advantage of by the authorities of those days to make the relatives of the murderer, or the person injured, if the criminal was condemned for any lesser offence, the actual executioner. To the peg a long string was fastened, and the injured party had to pull this, thus releasing the blade and killing the condemned. Where the victim was punished for horse or cattle stealing, then the stolen animal was attached to the rope, and actually killed the thief. These two instruments were most effective, but their use was purely local. Of notables, Morton, the Regent of Scotland, perished on the Scottish Maiden, in 1581, and the last two persons decapitated on it were the Marquis of Argyll, in 1661, and his son, the Earl of Argyll, in 1665.

A somewhat similar instrument was in use in Italy in the Middle Ages, under the name of "Mannaia," but it was reserved for nobles who had been condemned to death. Germany, too, had a species of mechanical headsman, known as "Hobel," or "Dolabra." Marshal Montmorency, also, was executed on a primitive guillotine, at Toulouse, in 1632.

Then mechanical contrivances fell into disuse until Dr. Guillotine, on December 1st, 1789, brought forward a motion in the French Constituent Assembly, proposing that in future the capital punishment in France should be decapitation by means of a machine. He was laughed at at the time, but a couple of years later his suggestion was adopted, though the instrument selected by the committee appointed to inquire into the matter was not the one Guillotine had suggested.

The first guillotine was made by a German of the name of Schmidt, from drawings supplied by Dr. Antoine Louis, and it was first brought into use on 25th April, 1792, the victim being a highwayman, named Pelletier. For a short while the public called the instrument "Louisette," or "La Petite Louison," but before long the original proposer of the beheading machine was remembered, and the guillotine got its popular name.

In appearance the modern instrument consists of a table, at the end of which are a couple of upright posts, between which the triangular knife slides. The blade is very heavily weighted, and is as sharp as skill can make it. On the table is a movable board, to which the victim is strapped, and which normally stands upright at the foot of the instru-

ment. At the foot of the uprights is a wooden pillow, containing a curved hollow to fit the lower half of the neck, and on to this a similar block of wood, with a semicircular groove to contain the upper half of the neck, can be lowered and secured by a catch. The projecting back of the weighty knife presses on this "lunette" when the blade has fallen. Beside one of the uprights is a small lever, which operates a catch, supporting the axe. But a touch is needed to release this and permit the great steel knife to come crashing down.

Let us suppose it is an execution morning in the palmy days of the Place de la Roquette. In the small hours of the night a heavy cart comes laboriously into the square, containing "La Veuve," or "The Widow," as the Parisians irreverently call the guillotine. Assistants set to work to erect this on the site marked out by the little stone blocks let into the ground. The uprights are placed in position, the table and its sliding board adjusted, and then the great axe is hauled up into its place and held there by the catch. The passers-by at that early hour have seen the labourers at work, and the word has gone round that "So-and-So is to be guillotined at daybreak." Soon a crowd gathers, and the gendarmerie and soldiers have to be called out to keep the mob within bounds.

Just as it is light a man with a reddish beard steps up and looks at the dreadful instrument, painted a horrid red. He is dressed in a tall hat and frock coat, and looks like an eminently respectable tradesman. He is the executioner, and, leaving a couple of his assistants to watch the guillotine, he enters the prison to claim his prey.

Accompanied by the chaplain and the governor of the gaol, he goes to the condemned cell, and the culprit is aroused. Till that moment the wretched man has not known his fate. All leave him but the priest for a few moments, and then he is taken to another apartment, where he is bound, and his hair cut by the assistant whom M. de Paris, or the executioner, has brought into the prison with him.

Brandy is offered to the prisoner, and then he is led, under an escort, and accompanied by the priest, to the prison gates. The great doors swing open, and the tiny procession of about a dozen persons passes out into the square. The mob hoots and boohs at the pale figure staggering along, with the headsman following in his footsteps. He shudders, and then catches sight of the odious red guillotine. He turns pale, and seems about to faint. In an instant he is caught by the attendants, pressed up against the upright board, and strong straps passed round his arms and legs. The plank is tilted up and slid along the table until the wretched criminal's head is beneath the knife, his neck resting in the hollow of the "lunette." The upper half of the wooden collar is lowered into its place and catches with a snap.

The murderer is about to say something, but before he can utter more than a syllable the lever is touched and the great blade falls with a thud. The crowd hardly realise what is taking place, so swift is the movement. The head has fallen into a basket of sawdust, an assistant is busy tying a strong cord round the neck to control the bleeding, while others are undoing the straps. As they rub their strained eyes, the people see the headless corpse rolled off the table into a wicker coffin, the head placed between the legs, and, ere a shout can be raised, the coffin is in a hearse and on its way to the cemetery, there to be buried, disinterred, and handed over to the medical schools.

Sometimes in the provinces and in the French colonies the scene of execution is some distance from the prison, and then the culprit has to be transported thither in a van. Occasionally he is not bound, and many and violent struggles have taken place between the assistants and the condemned, who objected to be forced to the guillotine. Recent regulations, however, have made it obligatory for all the doomed to be manacled, and the work of the headsman is easier.

An execution with the guillotine is soon over, and does not present the gory spectacle which imagination pictures. Contrary to general belief, the guillotine is not invariably a dealer of instantaneous death, there being at least one case on record when the knife had to be raised and let fall a second time.

A Grim Jest.

The dead body of a man was recently found with a gunshot-wound in the breast, which must have proved instantaneously fatal. It was never clearly established whether it was a case of murder or suicide, but it is a fact that the corpse was discovered underneath a board which bore the following notice:

"RUBBISH MUST NOT BE SHOT HERE!"

TOUCHING INSTANCE OF AMERICAN CLEMENCY.

On Friday, May 6, 1825, a man named Samuel Fields was convicted at Brookville, U.S.A., of the crime of murder, and sentenced to be executed. On May 27 the sheriff of the county, pursuant to the sentence of the court, at a few minutes before twelve o'clock, opened the doors of the prison and exhibited to public view one of the most awful spectacles the human eye could have beheld—it was the wretched Fields. He was lifted by four or five men on a platform erected on a wagon, and seated in a recumbent chair, which was considered necessary on account of his bodily debility. A procession was formed, and the wagoner drove towards the place assigned for his execution. He was clad in white—the usual habiliment. The old man, with snow-white locks, and a countenance that had lost its expression in wrinkles, whose manly frame had been visited by eighty-six winters, and whose candle of life was just flickering out, was conducted through a sympathising throng to the gallows. Here he was halted in the midst of three or four thousand spectators, who had assembled to witness the solemn scene.

The Rev. Augustus Jocelyn arose, and delivered an eloquent and appropriate sermon, and then said he had frequently conversed with the old man during his confinement, and that he had always found him truly penitent. The sheriff then told the prisoner "he had but twenty-three minutes to live." At this time he was ready to suspend the old man, the rope being round his neck, and made fast to the gallows. Every eye was riveted on the unfortunate object in breathless expectation. At this crisis a noble feeling pervaded the whole assemblage; the impulses of humanity were visibly depicted in almost every countenance.

Even at this moment the numerous multitude beheld in Fields all that was characteristic of a brave, patriotic, and active officer of the Revolution, and a man who had fought and bled in support of their institutions, and had wasted the flower of his youth in conquering and dispersing the enemies of their country, and who, for the first time in so long a life, had been charged with crime, forced by human authority to expect nothing but to meet his God.

No pardoning power was known to be present willing to interpose between the veteran and the grave. At this critical juncture, just as the sheriff was about to perform his duty, his excellency James B. Ray, Acting Governor of the State of Indiana, appeared on the scaffold, and addressed the unfortunate prisoner in the following words:

"Samuel Fields, you have been convicted of the crime of murder by a jury of your countrymen, and sentenced by the court to be executed on this day. Your last hour is just expiring. Your petitions have been received, weighed, and investigated. Your whole case has been examined and matured. In making this appeal, you have imposed on me the performance of the most responsible and important duty of my life. If, in coming to a conclusion on this subject, I had attempted to consult popular feeling, I must have been lost in the variety of opinion. Duty with me is above all other considerations, and my conscience must be my guide. Though you stand convicted, a majority of the officers of the court that tried you, and about 800 of your fellow-citizens, have petitioned in your behalf, including the clergy of your country, men well-known for their attachment to good government and law, men who would never identify themselves with your case if they thought you a wilful and malicious murderer. Your own and these petitions have had weight with me, but let me assure you that you have had a still more powerful advocate. The blood you so freely parted with in our struggles for independence and your infirmities and scars speak for you. Those soldiers who fought for our common country, who now stand around, are powerful orators and successful advocates for you, and I almost fancy that I hear the voices of Washington and Warren calling for mercy in your behalf. Take this, sir (handing him a pardon), and remember that by exercising this high constitutional power I am responsible to my country for your good behaviour. Though I view you as a child in intellect, and as a dying man, yet, should you ever, by the favour of heaven, be restored to health, remember that I am your security for your conduct. Whilst I am willing, under all circumstances, to restore you to life, I do not do so under the belief that you have committed no crime. No; my opinion is that you might have been convicted of manslaughter. But as the verdict stands against you, you must either be hanged or pardoned. I have no power to commute, to change your punishment—no, none—but to forgive you. In doing this I may err. But 'to err is human, to forgive divine!'"

Never had electricity more influence upon the human frame than this act had on the prisoner and spectators. The throb of universal approbation was instantaneously felt, and some even shouted for joy. The poor old man raised his head from the most stupid lethargy, and at once became animated; gratitude was immediately seated on his heart. But few seemed dissatisfied with this magnanimous act of the governor.

The Trickery of Henry James

How he and five companions plotted to win a Sculling Match by Fraud.

"Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other side."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Macbeth," Act. I., Sc. 7.

THE 5th of August, 1841, was a fine, bright day, not too sultry, but sufficiently warm to enable people to stand about out of doors without any fear of getting chilled. Along the banks of the River Thames, in the neighbourhood of the Custom House, crowds of people were gathered, eagerly watching the sculling races which were in progress, for among the competitors were several who had at one time or another held the Thames blue ribbon for sculling—Doggett's coat and badge. The competitions were confined to professional watermen, who had served their apprenticeship and been accepted as "free and ancient watermen," and along the waterside the prospects of the various oarsmen had been discussed for many days, and heavy bets laid and taken on the chances of the fancied men.

The classic race of the day was one for a prize skiff, valued at about sixty pounds, and a sum of money, and the men "in the know" were divided in their opinions as to whether Henry Hipkins or William Radford would win it. Up to the day of the race Radford had a large following, but on August 5, when Hipkins, clad in a pink costume, sculled down to the starting point, those who favoured Radford began to feel shaky, and were prone to admit that his chances against Hipkins were not so good as they had imagined.

On the bank the bookmakers were calling the odds against the two favourites, and as waterman after waterman stepped up to put his money on the pink sculler the odds against Hipkins grew shorter and shorter, while even at good prices Radford found few backers. This was a serious matter for some of the riverside characters, who had invested their all on their champion, Radford, and who had supported him during the time of his training for the race.

The preliminary heats passed off rapidly enough, both Hipkins and Radford winning in their first two each and being drawn to meet one another in the fifth, or final, round. The style shown by the two competitors in these early heats showed that Radford's chances were very slight indeed, for he was much more exhausted than Hipkins at the close of each race, and won his heats in much slower time than his enemy in pink.

The preliminary heats were rowed off in the morning, and then other competitions occupied the attention of the spectators until four o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour the event of the day was to take place. The backers of Radford took little interest in the other races; they were disheartened at the form shown by their champion, and angered at the skill of Hipkins. The more they thought of it the more certain did it appear that they would be ruined, for some of them had staked all their savings on Radford. They stood about in groups, discussing their almost certain losses and cursing the day that they backed William Radford. The most disconsolate of all, however, were the brothers James, William Legon, King, Rivett, and Cook, the party who had supported Radford right through his training, and who stood to lose a large sum of money if he did not win the race.

The two Jameses were fairly well-to-do men, of a class rather above that of their companions, who were watermen. Both men were regarded as thorough sporting men on the riverside, and had been ardent supporters of rowing—then a much more popular form of sport in London than it is at present—for many years. The James brothers, according to popular rumour, made a good deal of money out of their favourite sport, and their opinion was regarded as sufficiently sound for others to follow their lead blindfold. Thus it was that, while Radford's defeat meant heavy pecuniary loss to the Jameses, together with loss of prestige, to their companions it meant virtual ruin.

After the fourth heat the James party adjourned to the Jolly Waterman, a riverside public-house, where they were shortly joined by Radford.

"Bill," said Rivett, "can't you do better than you've done?"

"No; he'll beat me, I fear. He's better than I thought. Young Hipkins never showed what he could do before, d——n him! We're done this time."

"Can't you get at him, King?" asked Henry James. "It 'd be worth more than the cost of the —— boat to him if he'd lose. You go and see the lad and offer him a 'blind' if he doesn't row too hard. He'll take it all right. It's only the brass he wants."

"He ain't that sort," said Radford, as King went out to look for Hipkins. "He's got backers, sure enough, that'll make it well worth his while to win and to give us away as well."

While waiting for the return of the emissary the party fell to drinking—at the Jameses' expense—and discussing the sudden change in Hipkins's form. "He's been kept for this, you bet!" said Cook. "He's never won anything good before, and when he rowed for the badge he was nowhere."

"That he has, sure enough," responded Legon. "I wish I had the young blackguard here for a moment. I'd spoil his chances."

"Never fear. He'll take the brass all right," remarked George James. "That sort always does."

However, George James was wrong, for King shortly reappeared with every evidence of having been hardly handled, his coat torn, his face smeared with blood, one eye swollen, and liberal splashes of dirt on his garments. "It's no go!" he exclaimed. "He won't listen to reason. Told me to go to the deuce with my money, and then called some of his friends, who hustled me, and would have chucked me in the river if I'd not managed to get away. B—— him! He's got men behind him with brass."

On receipt of this news the party was silent for a few minutes, wondering what they could do. "You've got us into this, James," muttered Legon. "You knew so much." And his fellows took their cue from him, and abused the two Jameses roundly, forgetting that on very many occasions their patrons had enabled them to make money.

"It's all very well for you to swear, lads," rejoined Henry James. "We stand to lose more than you do, after all."

"Yes, governor, but you've got more where that came from, and we haven't!" was Rivett's retort.

"Well, something must be done," continued Henry. "Radford, can't you catch the fellow a skelp in the back and disable him?"

"Fouling ain't allowed," was Radford's surly comment.

"Oh, d——n 'allowed'! Get him a good one after you round the tier. You'll be too far off for the judge to see you then. Catch him on the shoulder with the blade of the scull, and that'll stop him off a bit."

Radford demurred, saying that he did not much like to hurt his opponent, who was a good enough lad, but he was over-persuaded by his companions, and as he rose to go to the river again said that he would see what he could do, but that all must back him up and swear that fouling was permissible after they had rounded the tier.

"That'll be all right, sonny!" replied George James. "We'll see that the judge allows it."

When Radford had gone the men were silent again for a short time, and then Henry James said, "I think it would be as well if we went down near the tier in the cutter, so that we can swear there was no foul if there is any bother."

To this the others agreed, and they went down to the river and got into their boat. They then rowed to the starting place.

Henry James was lying in the bow of the cutter, and offered to assist in the start. His offer was accepted, and by the direction of the starter he caught hold of the stern of Hipkins's skiff. All being ready, the pistol was fired and Radford started off. James, however, held tight on to Hip-

kins's boat, intending to delay him and thus give Radford an advantage. He was clumsy, however, and the starter saw him and ordered a fresh start.

"I'll have someone else to start me, sir," said Hipkins. "James held me back that time."

"You lie, you young b——! I did not hold you."

"I saw you myself, James," said the starter. "Get clear of the skiffs. We don't want your help."

Angry at being caught, James called to his companions to row on towards the tier, round which the scullers had to go, and as he passed Hipkins hissed out, "You blackguard! So help me heaven, if you can win the boat, you shall not!" While George James, who was steering, said, "You young b——, you shall have a swim for it this time!"

Hipkins took no notice of the remarks at the time, and got back to the starting place, while the cutter went down stream towards the tier. Broughton, the starter, heard James's remarks to Hipkins, and said to the lad, "You row for all you're worth, Hipkins, and if you win the boat you shall have her. Don't mind those men." The two skiffs were brought into line again, and then started fairly at the pistol shot. Radford tried his hardest to keep up with Hipkins, and all the way down to the tier the skiffs were on a level, the occupants of the cutter cheering their champion as he passed them.

"If he can only manage to hit Hipkins a good one, he will win all right," remarked Henry James. "Keep across a little, where we can see them pass going up stream again."

As the scullers neared the tier, Hipkins kept out a little, for Radford had the advantage of the inside course, and Hipkins was anxious not to give him any opportunity to foul him. As they passed the tier, before turning, Hipkins was about a yard ahead, but he lost this advantage owing to having the outside track. Starting up stream, Radford drew near to his opponent; James and his companion watched carefully. Closer Radford got, and then managed to catch Hipkins a smart blow in the back with his scull, and shot a little ahead with the force of the stroke.

"Good! He's got him a beauty!" shouted James to his friends. "Now Radford 'll be all right, you see." But he had shouted too soon. Hipkins was not seriously disabled, and rowed rapidly after Radford, gaining steadily on him till they got abreast of Horsleydown New Stairs, where he caught him up and touched him on the outside quarter, turning him round.

"My God! look at that!" cried Henry James. "Give way, men, as hard as you can!" The rowers in the cutter pulled as hard as they could, and a very few strokes sufficed to bring them up to Hipkins's skiff. Then James, leaning out of the boat, caught the skiff by the rowlock and deliberately upset Hipkins in the water, shouting at the same time, "Row on, Radford, you'll win easily."

Hipkins sank immediately, and when he struggled to the surface again, he was caught by Henry James and pulled into the cutter, where he lay exhausted at the bottom of the boat. It was a narrow shave for him, for he could not swim.

As might be expected, Radford paddled easily to the winning post, where he reported that Hipkins had accidentally upset, and that the cutter was bringing him to shore. What had really transpired was not seen from the winning-post, and the prize skiff was awarded to Radford.

HE WAS CAUGHT BY HENRY JAMES.

The cutter with Hipkins on board made for George's Stairs, and there landed the party. Hipkins was taken home, and was laid up in bed for a week. The Jameses and their friends obtained the money for their bets, and thought that the whole affair had blown over. At the end of seven days, however, Hipkins was able to get about again, and he talked the matter over with his friends. Then the two Jameses began to get alarmed, and sent a messenger to the sculler, saying that they would pay his doctor's bill if he would let the whole matter drop. Hipkins was sick of the trouble, and felt half inclined to do so, but he was urged by those who had lost money through the race to insist on justice being done. The brothers James grew more alarmed, and collected their friends together to discuss what had better be done. All agreed to swear that the skiff had turned over before the cutter reached it, and that Hipkins had first fouled Radford. The exact details of the story had not been definitely settled when a constable appeared with a warrant to arrest the entire party, together with another man named Morris, a holder of Doggett's Coat and Badge, who had been in the cutter, but who had taken no part in the previous discussion nor

had done more than sit in the boat while the race was in progress.

The men were arrested and taken to the Thames Police Court, where they were committed for trial on a charge of conspiring to obtain possession of the prize skiff and of other money by fraud, the first charge of attempting to murder Hipkins being abandoned.

The case caused widespread interest, for many wagers had been made on the race, and until it was settled whether Radford had fairly won it his upholders were not certain whether they would have to return their money or not. On September 27, 1841, the seven accused were placed at the bar of the Central Criminal Court and charged with a misdemeanour. They pleaded "Not guilty." Hipkins was the first witness, and gave his account of the affair, saying that he had never been near enough to Radford to foul him until they had both turned the tier, and that there Radford had struck him on the back with his scull. He had heard the two Jameses say that he was not to win the race, but he was determined to do so all the same. It was perfectly fair for him to foul Radford, for it was the custom in watermen's wagers for fouling, and even sinking, to be permitted. He would not have complained if his own boat had been sunk by Radford, or if he had overturned when he had fouled his opponent, but he did complain of Henry James, who had nothing to do with the race, catching hold of his skiff and upsetting him. He could easily have beaten Radford, and, indeed, was well ahead of him, when he was upset. Counsel for the defence tried to make capital out of the fact that on one occasion Hipkins had upset a boy into the river, and the boy had been drowned, but it was clearly proved that the fatality was purely accidental.

Hipkins was followed by several other watermen, who had been close to the two skiffs when the occurrence took place, and they all swore definitely that they had seen Henry James catch hold of the rowlock of the skiff and upset it. They had also heard the conversation in the cutter between the men of the party; all, however, agreed that Morris had not taken any part either in the conversation or in the rowing; he had merely accepted the offer of James to come for a row. A verdict of acquittal was, therefore, returned in favour of Morris, and the trial of the other six proceeded.

A day was occupied in deciding whether fouling was permissible in watermen's races, and the point was left over for the present while the defence was entered upon. The accused called a number of watermen, who explained, by means of models, the exact position of the two skiffs and the cutter. The remarkable point was that they all placed their models in exactly the same position, and their accounts of what took place were identical. They said that it was while attempting to get clear of Radford's skiff that Hipkins had upset himself. The cutter was some distance away at the time, and had come up when Hipkins was struggling in the water. The position in which they put the models was quite different from those in which the witnesses for the prosecution placed them, and the latter proved that if the skiffs had been in the position alleged by the defence, then it would have been impossible for Hipkins to have overturned in the way he did. Smart cross-examining on the part of the prosecution then elicited the interesting fact that the Jameses, while on bail, had invited all the witnesses for the defence to supper, and then taught them, with the models, the lesson they were to repeat in the court.

With that the defence broke down, so the counsel for the prisoners tried another move. He put in the rules under which the race was to be rowed, and which clearly said that any competitor fouling was to be disqualified. He contended, therefore, that the race was over when Hipkins fouled Radford, but it was proved that Radford fouled Hipkins first, and that he fouled him at the instigation of the prisoners, so, after the Recorder had summed up, the jury brought in a verdict of guilty.

Judgment was postponed till the following sessions, when the Recorder said that it was clear there had been a conspiracy to obtain possession of the prize skiff, and of certain sums of money, but that it was essential to the case that Radford should have been included in the indictment. As the prisoners had been in custody since the previous session, they would be discharged, their punishment being the month's imprisonment which they had served.

Great dissatisfaction was felt at the sentence, for it was generally thought that some severe punishment would be inflicted which would help to put down the trickery which existed in almost every form of sport in those days, and which was particularly rampant in rowing matches.

EDWARD SMART

BRUTALLY MURDERS THE FIRST WOMAN HE MEETS ON THE HIGHWAY.

LUCY DERRICK'S FATE.

A LOTTERY OF LIFE.

Fearful Scene on the Scaffold.

". . . . See, his face is black and full of blood;
His eyeballs further out than when he lived.
Staring full ghas l/ like a strangled man;
His hair uprea.'d, his nostrils stretched with struggling;
His hands abread displayed, as one that grasp'd."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Henry IV." 2nd Part.

"WHY, Edward, what brings you down here? I am surprised. You are the last person I should have expected to see."

These were the remarks made by a buxom woman, as she opened the door of her little cottage in Cambridge Street, Totterdown, in answer to a knock by a short, dark, sturdy man. He was the woman's nephew, whom she had not set eyes on for many years, and his name was Edward Smart. He was a well-dressed man, and looked what he really was, a mechanic, although there was an upright bearing about him, and a quickness of movement which told that he had had experience in the army.

Responding to his aunt's invitation to walk in and take a chair before the fire and make himself comfortable, for it was a cold, raw day in the February of 1879, he evidently meant making himself quite at home, for he handed the woman a large bundle that he had been carrying, and threw himself into the gaffer's easy-chair. Lighting his pipe, for a few minutes he puffed away silently. Then he turned to Mrs. Short (for that was his aunt's name) and said, "Well, Julia, I've come to stop with you for a few weeks. Since I cut the army there's been little doing in my line up in London, the work in all the engineers' shops being very slack. So I've come down to see if I can find anything in Bristol, and in the meanwhile would like to stay along of you until I get a job."

Mrs. Short made no objection, providing that her husband agreed, for they were kind, homely people, and the woman no doubt thought that if Edward Smart did get some work it would be something towards their rent at any rate. So when Mr. Short came home, it was arranged that he should occupy the spare room in their little cottage, and make himself at home with them.

This was towards the end of February, and days and weeks passed by without the man getting a situation. Whether he tried or not, the Shorts were unable to say. All they knew was that he absented himself during most part of the day, and always said that he had walked into Bristol. As the time went on, however, Mrs. Short began to get somewhat fidgety about her nephew, who was really proving a burden to them. Besides which, he was by no means pleasant company, for he would sit for hours without speaking, go to bed very early, and be out and about long before they were up.

"Do you know, father," said Mrs. Short one night when they went to bed, "I don't like the look of Edward at all. There's something about his eyes that alarms me. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he were to make away with himself or do something dreadful. Whether he's lost heart about get-

ting no work, or whether that soldiering in hot countries has affected his head, I can't tell, but, mark me, something's going to happen that'll make us both wish we had never seen him down here."

"Tut, tut!" said Short. "You're only worrying because the chap hasn't got any work yet, and I guess he's worrying about the same thing. Wait till he gets into collar and he'll be all right again."

"Ah, well, we shall see," replied his wife. "But, you mark my words, something's going to happen. I have a foreboding."

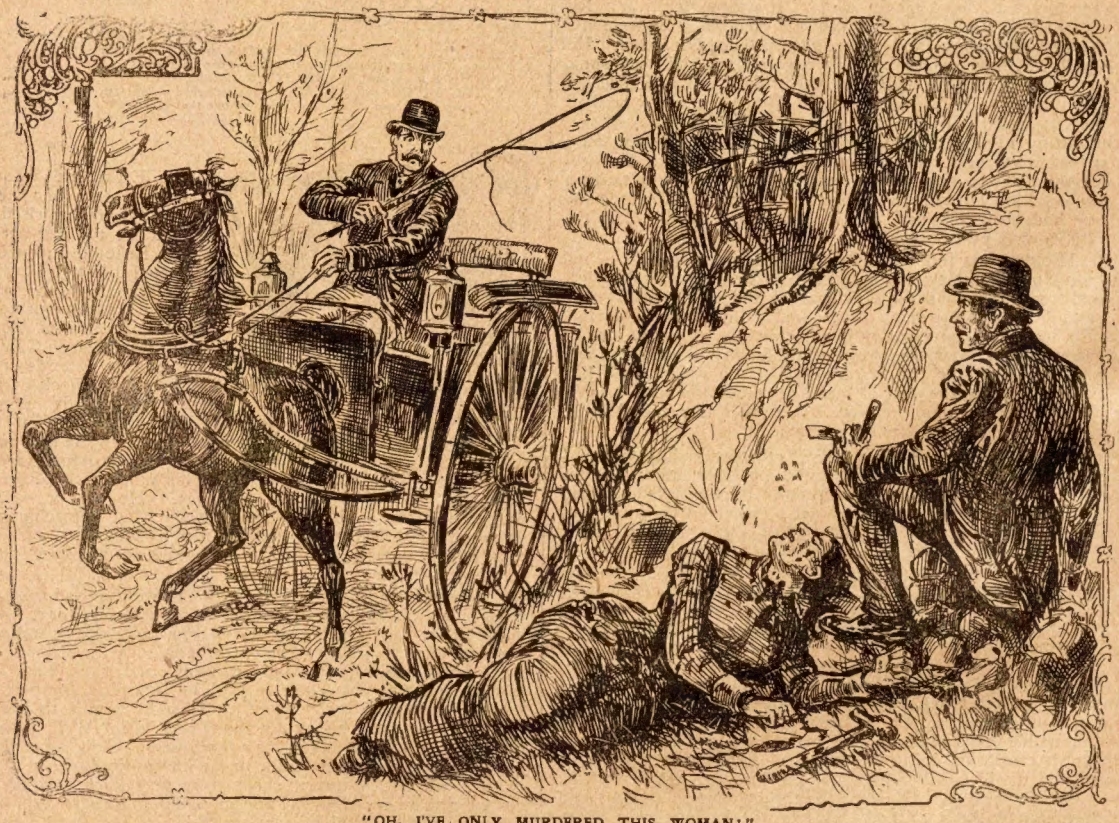
This conversation took place on the night of Tuesday, April 1, and on the following morning they heard Edward Smart moving about in the kitchen, not at all an unusual thing, before they were up. They also heard the door close at about 5.30.

On coming downstairs, the quick eyes of Mrs. Short missed some of her husband's things. His boots, which had been cleaned overnight, were not in their usual place by the bottle, and shuffled off to his work, muttering to himself as he went along, "Well, well, this is a rum go, anyhow. Believe the old woman's right; there must be something in it."

And it would have been well if he had let the "old woman" have her way and gone straight to the police and informed them of their suspicions, when possibly one of the most bloodthirsty and atrocious crimes that has ever been perpetrated might have been averted.

And now let us follow the movements of Mr. Edward Smart, which we may easily do, for the police were able to trace him throughout, and he when in custody disguised nothing.

Little sleep had the man had during that night of April 1, 1879. He lay tossing upon his humble bed with a feverish brain, and again and again an irresistible craving for blood came over him. About five o'clock in the morning he started up in his bed, with a face looking terrible as the pale grey light of the coming day fell upon it. There was



"OH, I'VE ONLY MURDERED THIS WOMAN!"

cupboard, his cap, which hung behind the door, was not there, and his silk neckerchief was not to be found.

"Oh, the wicked, ungrateful wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Short to her husband as he came down to wash and get ready for work. "Edward's been and stolen your things, after all we've done for him, too. There now, what did I tell you last night?"

"Well, it certainly is a rum go, and no mistake. But never mind, old gal, perhaps it is as well as we've got shot of him. First loss is the best loss, and, after all, it ain't worth much what he's prigged, and he'll come to no good with 'em," said Mr. Short, as he was lathering his chin ready for his morning's shave. "But, I say, missus, where's my razor? That ain't gone, too, surely?"

Mrs. Short turned pale. "There, now, what did I tell you? Something awful is going to happen. What does Edward want with a razor? He never shaves himself. What shall we do? I'm as sure as you're a living man there's going to be bloodshed. Let us go for the police."

"Do nothing of the kind," said her husband. "If anything goes wrong we shall hear of it soon enough. What good can it do to cry out stinking fish?" And Gaffer Short wiped the lather from his chin, took up his food-basket and

the look of the half-madman, half-fiend in the expression of his eyes as he, with a low, demoniacal laugh, muttered to himself, "Yes, by heaven, I'll do it! Better be in hell's fire than in this cursed world! Cut my throat? No fear—leave that to fools. I'll have a life for a life, and a —— woman's life, too, curse 'em; they've been no good to me! The first —— woman I get a chance with this very day I'll swing for! Ha! ha! ha! A life for a life—a life for a life!"

Thus the fiend, for he was no longer a man, his devilish thoughts and murderous resolution having transformed the being so that could his aunt have seen him she would never have recognised him as Edward Smart.

Downstairs he went in his stockinged feet, and the first thing to do was to pull on his benefactor's boots and appropriate his cap and scarf, making a poor disguise. Then from the dresser drawer he took two sharp knives and from the coal cellar a heavy hammer, which he placed in the large breast-pocket of his jacket. A moment's pause, when he exclaimed, "Yes, by heaven, the very thing!" Taking Short's razor from the mantelpiece he opened it, and looked upon it with a gleeful expression, making a slash with it through the air, as if rehearsing for a true cut at his imaginary victim's throat.

He had certainly well armed himself, and if his resolution was as good as the instruments with which he proposed to commit the extraordinary deed there was little chance for the poor creature whose fate it was to fall across the murderer's path.

It is a fine, fresh April morning, and the birds are full of song. The lark is rising to a little speck in the sky as it trills merrily in the morning air, and the rich notes of the thrush and blackbird are heard in the trees, whose buds are bursting forth to herald the approach of spring. It is a morning upon which all things seem glad, and on the main Gloucester road, between Thornbury and Morton, nature is smiling her sweetest over the large sheet of water known as Pit Pool, the bright sun lighting it up and glinting over the pretty surrounding landscape.

It is a place and the time for those who love life and are joyful to be out in the pure, free air, and there is a gladness in the tones of the hearty "Good mornings" which are exchanged by the labourers as they pass each other on their way to their work.

But the sun is getting high and the morning speeds along. Still, there is little traffic on the road just here. Now and then a loaded waggon, perhaps a drove of sheep, or a few cows, relieve the silence of the quiet district. Pedestrians there are few, for the workmen are in the fields and there are not many tramps about this neighbourhood. Presently at the bend of the road the figure of a man appears, and he will not pass without calling attention, for, although he is dressed simply as an ordinary mechanic, there is in the expression of his face and deportment something very peculiar as he strides along quickly, with hands opening and closing, as if involuntarily clutching at some invisible substance. He is muttering to himself, "How much farther before I find her? Are there no cursed women about these parts? By heaven, I'll go mad if I don't do it soon!" And then, catching sight of a cottage, with its pretty little patch of garden gay with flowers in front of it, he stops, lifts the latch of the gate, and approaches the door and knocks. A woman comes. "Good morning, ma'am," he says in a husky voice, and his hand creeps into the breast-pocket of his coat, "will you please to give me a drink of water?"

"Certainly, my lad," the woman replied cheerfully, and is turning into the cottage to get a mug. His hand is upon the handle of the hammer, and he is about to draw it out and deal the death-blow whilst the unsuspecting woman's back is turned. In another instant it would be buried in her skull, but——

"Dolly can't find me!" comes the cry of a child's voice as some bright little things at play going to school stop at the cottage and peer with curiosity at the strange man, their pretty faces showing through the railings which divide the garden from the road.

Little do those innocent little dears know that they have been instrumental in averting a fearful crime and that their timely arrival has saved the poor cottager's life. Her time had not come.

"Curse the —— kids! Baulked again!" he mutters as he takes the mug of water, almost snatches it, from the woman's hand, and, making a greedy gulp at it, throws the remainder on the path, and without a word of thanks hands her the mug, turns on his heel, and makes once more for the road, the children scattering as if in fear, and running off as if to avoid evil.

More muttering, and onward he plods. Another bend in the road, and he breathes a long-drawn, sighing, "Ah!" Immediately in front of him is a woman, slowly walking in the direction he is taking. She is poorly clad, and is evidently a tramp, for she carries a brown paper parcel usual amongst hawkers of threads, needles, etc. Judging from the back of her figure, she is a well-made woman, of some thirty-five years of age.

The man glances behind him to see if anybody follows, and pauses for a moment to listen. But all he can hear is the sound of the happy children's voices dying away in the distance. Quickening his pace, at the same time he draws the hammer from his pocket and holds it in firmly-clenched hand behind him. There is a fiendish glare in his eyes, and his nostrils dilate and his face blanches as, in three strides, he is close up upon the woman. She turns towards him and meets the terrible expression in those eyes. A slight scream escapes her lips as she sees the weapon swinging over her head, and the hammer comes down upon her skull with a crash and half buries itself in her brain, and she falls in a heap on the roadside, near a pile of granite stones. Without a word, and as quick as thought, the wretch is upon his knees beside the dying woman and has the razor out. Turning the limp body of the poor creature upon her back, he gives a gash with the sharp instrument across the throat from ear to ear. Then, as if still possessed of an insatiable greed for blood, he closes the dripping razor up and returns it to the case, when he feels in his pockets for the knives. Taking one of them, he inflicts more gashes over the throat, and the blood spurts over him, bathing his hands and face as he stoops over his victim's body, as if gloating over the terrible crime he has committed.

Then, with a devilish grin upon his face, he forces a laugh and sits down upon the heap of stones beside the corpse, which is lying in a great pool of blood, which is gradually spreading half across the road and flashing crimson in the sunlight. "Ah! ah! number one life gone; now let them take the other. My share of the work is done!" And, with folded arms and bloody face, he is an awful spectacle to look upon.

And there he sits for half an hour in silence. Even the singing of the birds seems hushed, or they have ceased because a great black cloud has obscured the sun, as if the very heavens frowned upon the diabolical deed, and there is a chilliness borne upon the breeze that even sends a shudder through the frame of the wretched man who sits sentinel over the woman he has so cruelly done to death. Presently there is a grating sound and the patter of hoofs upon the road. It is evidently some light vehicle drawn by a fast-trotting horse. On it comes, until at the bend of the road at which the murderer first sighted his prey. But what is the matter? The horse tosses back his head and shies. This is a most unusual freak, and his master, Mr. Charles Cox, of Charfield, a commercial traveller, who has driven the same horse upon the same road for years, knows that there is something amiss. Coaxing his horse to proceed, after much difficulty, he nears the man seated upon the stones, and the horse, seeing the blood in the road, which he had scented from afar, stops short and gets on his haunches.

The man sits as motionless as a statue and apparently as much concerned.

"Why, man, what's the matter?" asks Mr. Cox.

"Oh, I've only murdered this woman," comes the reply, as unconcernedly as if he had but lost his train and was making light of it.

For a moment the dumbfounded traveller hardly knew how to act. He dared not get down from his trap on account of the frightened horse, and he very naturally came to the conclusion that he was confronted by a dangerous lunatic. "You had better stay where you are," he said, in as commanding a voice as he could assume under the circumstances, and, whipping up his horse, he started off in the direction of Thornbury for assistance. Some few hundred yards down the road he met a man repairing the road, and, telling him briefly the facts, desired him to go on to where the man was and watch him in case he attempted to make off. This the roadman did, with no little reluctance, and Mr. Cox galloped his horse into Thornbury and acquainted the police.

As luck would have it, though, a few moments after Mr. Cox had left, Superintendent Crutchley, of the Sodbury Division, came along in his trap. On nearing the place, as in the former case, his horse became very restless, and he knew there was something wrong—thought it might be a drunken tramp lying in the road. Nearing the scene of the outrage, he was astonished to see the man sitting on the stones, with his face and hands besmeared with blood, and the woman lying by the road with the fearful gashes in her throat. A little farther up was the roadman, as white as a ghost and too terrified to speak. The superintendent called him to come and hold his horse, but the fellow was too frightened to approach, and the man, slowly rising as Crutchley asked, "Why, what have you had happen here?" replied, "Only I've killed the woman. I suppose you want me. All right. I'll get up with you." This was spoken in the calmest possible manner, and the fellow stepped up into the trap and sat beside the officer. Instructions having been given to the roadman to stay by the body until assistance came to remove it, the superintendent drove his prisoner into Thornbury, meeting Mr. Cox and the other officers on the road, the latter proceeding to the place where the body lay, whence it was taken to a tavern in order to hold an inquest.

On being charged, the man gave the name of Edward Saunders, and said that he was a pressman from London, declaring that he knew nothing about the woman, for he had never seen her before she was a few yards away from him immediately prior to the murder.

At the inquest the body of the poor creature was identified by her uncle, John Cooksley, of Blaydon, Somersetshire, as that of his niece, she having been his sister's daughter. Her name was Lucy Derrick, and she was 35 years of age. A

poor, harmless, hard-working woman, she had been employed for many years at the farm of Mr. Bridges, at Yatton. The last person she saw was a labourer named Jacob Needs, and that was at a public-house only the day before the murder, when the two had several drinks together. It was through this man that her friends were traced, for upon the woman's body was found a love-letter couched in the most affectionate terms and commencing, "Dear Jacob." The rough fellow was terribly cut up about the woman's death, for it was said that he and Lucy Derrick were to have been married. Of course the jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder" against Edward Saunders, and the poor woman's body was buried in Thornbury churchyard, an immense crowd of people attending out of curiosity, although not one of the woman's relations was present, and even the coffin bore no name-plate or date. The chief and only mourner was Jacob Needs.

On being brought up a second time before the justices, Edward Saunders declared that his right name was Smart, and this statement was confirmed by his aunt, who came over from Totterdown to tell what she knew about the affair. The remarkably cool manner in which Edward Smart treated the whole affair was astounding. Without the slightest trace of insanity, he persisted in the statement that he had committed this cold-blooded deed solely for the sake of qualifying himself to be hanged, declaring that he did not wish to live any longer.

Having been sent for trial, there was little difficulty in disposing of the case, for the prisoner had no defence, and the only plea made on his behalf was that of insanity and the absence of motive. His aunt, Mrs. Julia Short, was examined at some length, and proved that he was occasionally very strange in his habits, and that he had complained a good deal recently with pains in the head, and declared his desire not to live. It was also elicited that his family were well-to-do at Brighton, but none came to his support or to acknowledge him save the aunt who had befriended him.

After much deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty," and the judge passed sentence of death in the usual manner. But if the prisoner could have been persuaded to keep quiet and an appeal had been made for a respite on the plea of insanity, there is little doubt but that it would have succeeded. But the man so courted death, and appeared to be so clear minded upon everything, that it puzzled medical men to diagnose the state of the man's mind.

But, as if the horror connected with the brutal murder itself were not sufficient to class it amongst one of the most terrible crimes on record, the execution was destined itself to give one more tinge of colour to the gory tragedy, and it seemed that the wretched man was by the act of Providence to receive more than he really bargained for at the finish.

By all accounts from those who were present, the last scene of all was terrible indeed.

The place where Edward Smart was to make his exit from this world was Gloucester Gaol, and Marwood was the executioner. All went well, for the experienced operator could not have had a better subject, and the rope was adjusted and the culprit stood erect and motionless upon the drop.

There is that awful silence which seems to last for minutes, but which is really but a few seconds, immediately preceding the signal for the lever to be pulled over. On this occasion it seems to be longer than ever, as all hold their breath in silence. At length there is that awful click, and the figure quickly disappears, and the eyes are riveted upon the rope to watch for that spasmodic jerk which tells that another soul has taken flight at the hand of man.

But, look! There is a swinging of the cord and a twisting about as if it were some great line with an immense fish at the end struggling for freedom. Why, see, it is giving out! What can be wrong? Great God! the man's feet are surely touching the ground! What is Marwood about down there? Is he hanging upon the man's legs that the rope stretches so? Why, it is three minutes since the lever was pulled over, and still the rope vibrates. Yes, it is still now, and the body does not swing, for the toes are upon the ground, but the life has flown. It has been a terrible struggle for the wretch to die in the way he so earnestly wished!

What was amiss never really was known. It may have been that Marwood gave too much drop, or that the adjustment at the neck was defective; but the excuse made was that the rope itself stretched to such an extent that the feet were brought to the ground. Anyhow, it was a cruel way of taking a life—not more cruel, perhaps, than the method adopted to kill his victim—for who shall tell what were the agonies of mind and body when the wretched murderer was thus launched into eternity.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Saved Fourteen Murderers.

MISS JENNER, who died the other day at the age of sixty-nine, has had a most remarkable career. She was proud to recall that by interesting herself in the cases of women sentenced to death no fewer than fourteen had been reprieved. Beginning many years ago to care for young women who had been arrested for murdering their babes, she was at least once invited to sit beside the Judge during a trial of this kind. Miss Jenner had strange delusions, and was often the subject of public merriment. On one occasion she insisted on riding on the box of a cab behind the Lord Mayor of London when he visited Swansea several years ago. But there was a fine side to her character which won respect. She was a litigant on her own behalf, and on one occasion took up three hours with her conduct of the case in person.

Touching a Dead Body.

THE practice of touching a dead body in order to discover the murderer originated in the following occurrence. Certain gentlemen of Denmark, being one evening together at an inn, fell out amongst themselves, and from words came to blows; the candles being put out in this blind fray, one of them was stabbed with a poignard. The murderer was unknown, on account of the number of men engaged in the quarrel and of the fact that the wound was inflicted whilst they were all fighting together in the dark. It was, however, believed that the King's pursuivant was the assassin, and several of the gentlemen engaged in the mêlée accused him of it. Christianus II., who was the reigning king, in order to find out the homicide, caused them all to come together in the room, and, standing round the dead body, he commanded that they should, one after another, lay their right hand on the murdered gentleman's naked breast, and swear they had not killed him. They did so, and no sign appeared to accuse them; the pursuivant only remained, who went first of all and kissed the dead man's feet, but as soon as he laid his hand on his breast, and even before he uttered a word, the blood gushed forth in great quantities both out of the wound made by the poignard and out of the nostrils of the corpse; so that, urged by this evident accusation, he confessed the murder, and by the King's own sentence was immediately beheaded. Hereon arose the practice of finding out unknown murderers, and it was believed that cases are on record where murderers were revealed thereby, either by the bleeding of the corpse or the opening of its eyes, or some other extraordinary sign.

The following is another example, given by the writer Beard, of the efficacy of this practice. Henry Renzovius, a traveller, was found murdered on the highway near to Itzeho, in Denmark, in the year 1573, and as the murderer was unknown the magistrates of the place caused one of the dead man's hands to be cut off and hung up by a string on the top of the room in the town prison. About ten years afterwards, the murderer coming into the prison, the hand, that had been for a long time dry, began to drop blood upon the table that stood beneath it, and the gaoler, on seeing this, arrested the man, and advised the magistrate of the affair. The fellow was examined by the authorities, confessed his guilt, and was sentenced to death and duly executed.

REPLIES TO QUERIES

JUSTICIA.—The case you refer to is the Double Execution on December 19, 1876, but it occurred at two separate towns, Silas Barlow being hanged at Horsemonger Lane, and James Dalgleish at Carlisle.

JOHN NORTHAM.—The murder by Ferdinand Kohl, in 1864, was a very sensational case, and we shall assuredly give it in these columns. The victim's name was Fuhrkop, which you can pronounce as you please!

DUBIOUS.—Whenever a portrait of a criminal exists, it is always followed in the preparation of illustrations to our stories. For instance, in this issue the pictures of Courvoisier are drawn from a portrait of the criminal, sketched as he stood in the dock when tried for the murder of Lord William Russell.

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